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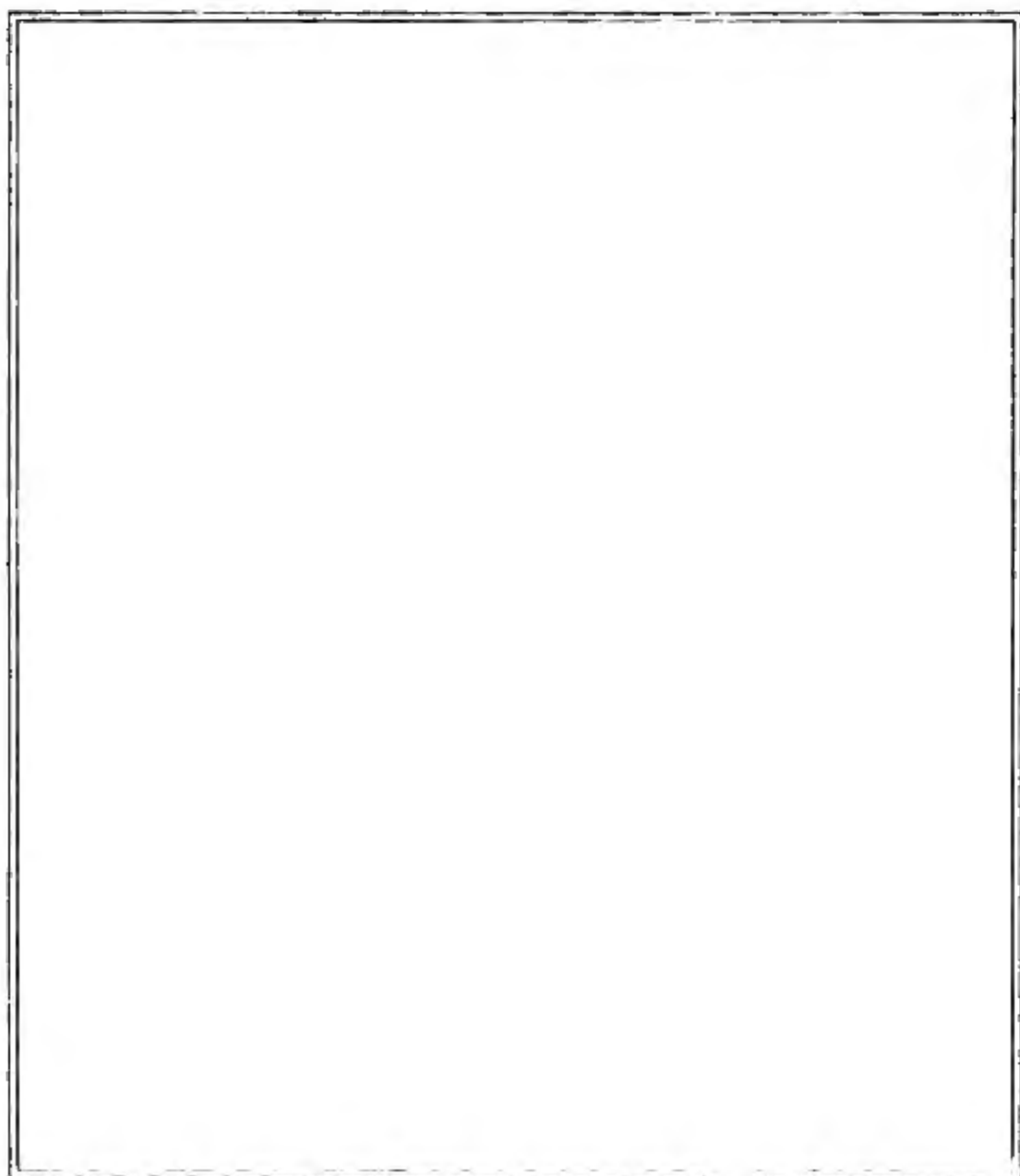




**THE LIFE AND LETTERS**  
**OF**  
**JOHN PAUL JONES**



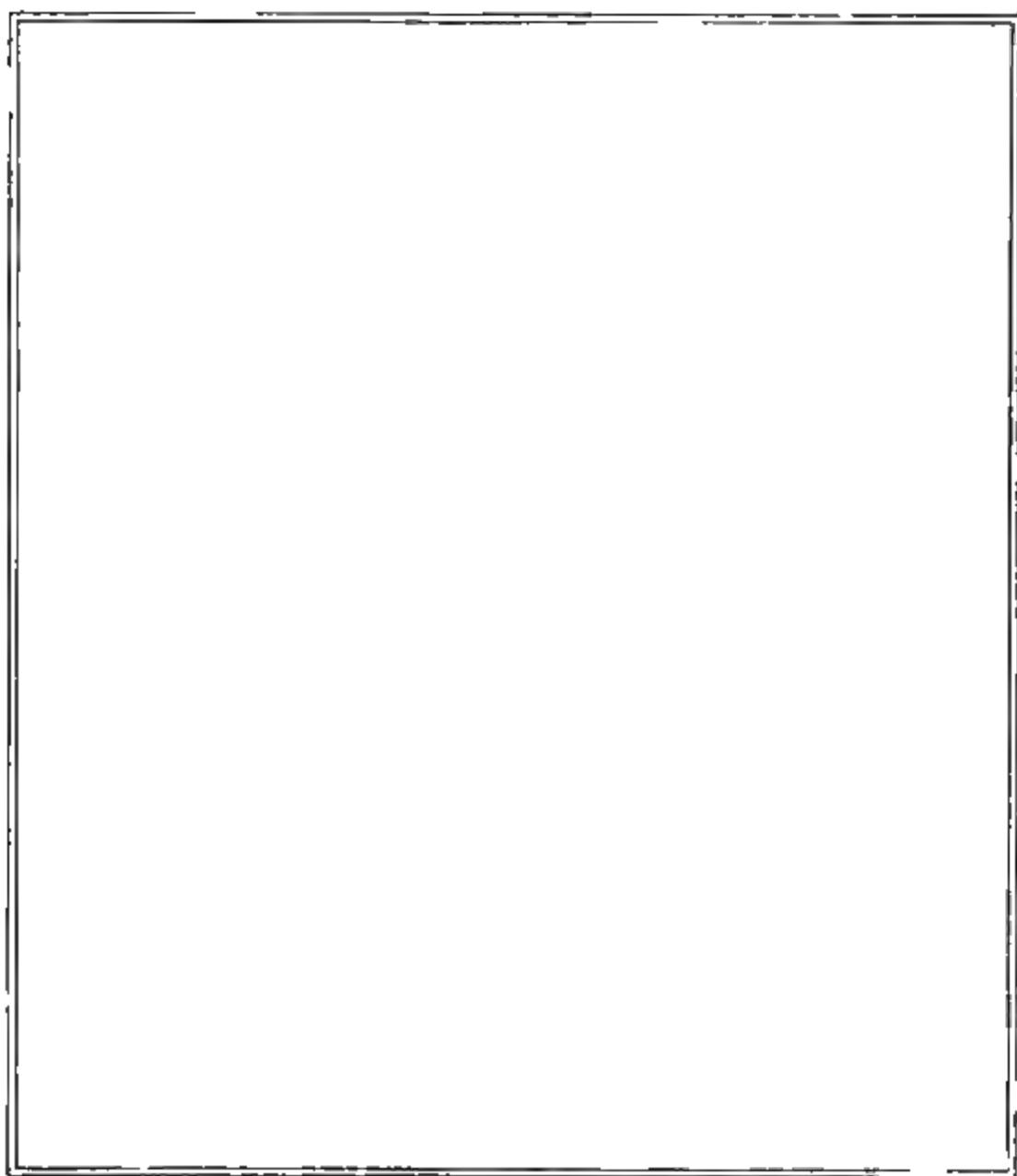




**JOHN PAUL JONES.**

**From the bust by Houdon in the possession of the Pennsylvania Academy  
of the Fine Arts.**

ISSUES



**JOHN PAUL JONES.**

**From the bust by Houdon in the possession of the Pennsylvania Academy  
of the Fine Arts.**

**THE LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
JOHN PAUL JONES**

**BY  
MRS. REGINALD DE KOVEN**

**ILLUSTRATED**

**VOLUME I**

**NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1913**



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**Published April, 1918**

**To**  
**CHARLES B. FARWELL**

**WHO SERVED**  
**HIS COUNTRY IN BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS**  
**FOR UPWARD OF TWENTY YEARS**  
**THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED**  
**BY HIS DAUGHTER**



## PREFACE

THE fame of Paul Jones has been the sport of romance and the plaything of tradition ever since the early days of his glorious association with America's struggle for independence. Bringing terror to the simple natives of the stricken British coasts by his descents upon their unprotected ports, hero of wellnigh impossible exploits and of battles fought by moonlight under the lee of their headlands, his name passed into the domain of romantic legend and was one to conjure with. Chap-books depicted him in highly colored prints, blood-thirsty and terrible, and mothers frightened their children with the bare mention of his name. During the years shortly following his death, history and romance alike were busy with his name. But these histories are now out of print, and only to be found in rare collections or on the reference shelves of public libraries, and the romances have ceased to charm. The patriotic services of General Horace Porter in discovering the hero's forgotten remains and bringing them to America amid manifold honors to a permanent and glorious resting-place at Annapolis have revived public interest in his character and deeds.

No one of the ten biographies of Jones which have been written may properly be called adequate, as none of them was prepared with a complete and comprehensive knowledge of the existing material, with exhaustive

research for unpublished documents, or with full attention to contemporary memoirs or historical publications.

Aside from the official documents on file in Washington, Paris, London, and St. Petersburg, which relate to his services, Paul Jones, like other distinguished men of his day, kept copies of his correspondence, preserving many of the letters which he received and autograph drafts of his own private and official letters. He left these papers to his family in his will. His eldest sister, Mrs. Taylor, selected from the collection the portion pertaining to his American services, sending it to Robert Hyslop, a solicitor of New York. Although considering them of little or no value, Mr. Hyslop retained them until his death, when they passed into the hands of a baker, through the windows of whose shop they were casually seen and thereafter acquired by Mr. George A. Ward, who communicated the news of his extraordinary find to John Henry Sherburne, Registrar of the Navy. Mr. Sherburne immediately set about the compilation of his "Life of Paul Jones," which appeared in the year 1825, in which he published many of the letters and official documents.

His book was only a compilation, lacking chronological sequence, and supplying the barest facts in regard to the character and private history of Jones. In the year 1830 a well-written book based on the documents retained by Mrs. Taylor in Scotland was published by an anonymous author in Edinburgh. It embodied the unpublished journal of Jones's Russian campaign, and, although presumably by a British sub-

ject, was unbiassed, even sympathetic, in its analysis of Jones's character. There is no evidence that the book awakened any general interest in Great Britain, or that the long-delayed publication of the true facts about Jones's connection with the Russian navy commanded any attention in Europe. In the same year in which this biography appeared, Miss Janette Taylor, who was filled with a laudable desire to defend her distinguished uncle's reputation, came to America with the intention of arranging for an American publication of all the papers in the possession of her family. She offered the letters to the Historical Society of New York, which was too poor to buy them; she then sought for an editor, and found one in the person of Robert Sands, who made in the greatest haste as ill-composed a volume as that of Sherburne, full of mistakes and of much bombastic comment upon the principles of democracy. The book, however, is the fullest printed repository of the papers which were brought to America by Miss Taylor, and which have unfortunately disappeared. The journal of the Russian campaign, another journal, the rough draft probably of that prepared for Louis XVI, together with many private papers, have never been traced since Miss Taylor gave them to Robert Sands. Jones left a few papers with John Ross in Philadelphia, when he returned to France after the close of the Revolution. These letters, with several which were originally consulted by Sherburne, have strayed into the hands of dealers and have been acquired by the various owners of the private collections of Jones's letters.

A short biography, written by Cyrus Townsend Brady

for the Great Commander series, published in 1900, contains some new facts in regard to Paul Jones's adoption of his name from Willie and Allen Jones of North Carolina.

These four books contain the authentic printed material regarding Jones. A brief biographical essay written anonymously by Benjamin Disraeli was published immediately after the appearance of Sherburne's compilation in London by John Murray. In 1841 Captain Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, of the United States navy, at the suggestion of Jared Sparks, who had collected material for a proposed biography of Jones, produced an undocumented book, valuable as a professional estimate of Jones's services but strangely biassed and critical in its attitude toward his character. None of the material collected by Sparks and now preserved in the Harvard library was utilized in Mackenzie's biography, although it had all been put at his disposition. An exhaustive examination of all the documents in the Government archives of the United States, England, France, and Russia, of all those existing in the University of Pennsylvania, in the Philadelphia Historical and Philosophical Societies, of the manuscripts in the Harvard, Boston, and New York public libraries, of the private collections of Jones's manuscripts owned by Messrs. Morgan, Barnes, Harbeck, Kane, Bixby, and the late John Boyd Thacher, has brought to light an astonishing amount of new material. Unknown incidents in Jones's life have been discovered, and several persons mysteriously referred to in his correspondence and importantly connected

with his career have been identified. For the courteous permission to examine and copy the documents in these private collections grateful acknowledgment is made, as well as for the able and invariably prompt attention to requests for facts and information given by Mr. Chas. W. Stewart, Superintendent of the Naval Records in Washington, and his assistant, Mrs. Annie H. Eastman. Particular thanks are due to the Rev. Cyrus Townsend Brady for the use of the original maps and data supplied to him by the chief of the topographical section of the imperial Russian general staff; to Commander Fulham, of the Naval Station at Lake Bluff, Illinois, for the information supplied relating to the system of fire control existing at the present day in comparison with that employed during the time of Paul Jones's service in the American navy; to M. le Vasseur and M. de Magellan for their careful and conscientious researches in the uncatalogued libraries and government archives of Paris, and for a like labor assumed by Madam Olga Stürck in St. Petersburg. Personal letters from the late Colonel Wharton Green, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, containing the statements made to him by individuals who had actually known Paul Jones, have served in conjunction with other hitherto unpublished material to throw light upon the obscure period of his life before the outbreak of the Revolution. Mr. Charles T. Gallagher, secretary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, has supplied a copy of the justificatory papers acquired by his lodge from Madame Gombault, the great-grandniece of Paul Jones, which accompanied the lost copy of his journal of his Russian campaign. These



papers, from which only brief excerpts had been published in the foot-notes of the Sands compilation, are of the utmost value in proving the veracity of Jones's own statements regarding his services in the Russian navy. The letters which Mrs. Taylor sent to America, and which formed the basis of Sherburne's biography, were eventually acquired by Peter Force and bought by the Congressional Library in the year 1867. This collection, with the additional and still uncatalogued papers of the Continental Congress, containing Jones's letters to the Marine Committee, together with the above-mentioned private and public collections of documents, have furnished the largest portion of the new information contained in the following pages. A conscientious effort has been made by the minute examination of all discoverable documents and a careful correlation of the information thus obtained, in connection with the records of contemporaneous history, to elucidate the hitherto obscure and misunderstood periods and aspects of the career of Paul Jones, and thereby to present a final and truthful estimate of his life and character.

ANNA FARWELL DE KOVEN.

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From a print in the collection of Mr. Charles A. Munn.

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## ERRATA

### Vol. I

- Page 71, note, line 7, for friendliness—read friendlessness.  
Page 188, note, after October 17—insert 1776.  
Page 205, line 4, for Baron Beaumarchais—read Caron de Beaumarchais.  
Page 274, line 18, for Firth of Forth—read Solway Firth.  
Page 275, line 8, for Glenbue Bay—read Luce Bay.  
Page 275, line 18, for Loughryan—read Loch Ryan.  
Page 276, line 16, for "attack"—read "a tack."  
Page 300, note, last line, for Salkirk—read Selkirk.

### Vol. II

- Page 176, last line, for Pinkney—read Hinckley.  
Page 232, note, for "the letter of October 10"—read "the Sherburne selection."  
Page 265, note, for 1837—read 1826.  
Page 483, line 9, for Cornil—read Capitan.  
Page 483, line 15, for Capitan—read Cornil.

CAPTAIN PAUL JONES SUBDUING A SAILOR WHO AT- TEMPTED TO STRIKE HIS COLORS IN THE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE "SERAPIS" . . . . .	456
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From a print in the collection of Mr. Charles A. Munn.

**JOHN PAUL JONES**

***VOLUME I***





## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

ON the southernmost border of Scotland, where the curving shore turns eastward into the Solway Firth, two estates belonging originally to the Earls of Selkirk occupy many acres of hill and forest. The estate of Arbigland, which lay to the south, was sold in the year 1722 to the family of Craik by the third Earl of Selkirk. The northern estate, stretching along the banks of the River Dee, remained in the possession of the Selkirk family. Its castle is situated at the mouth of the river, on a lovely wooded promontory called Saint Mary's Isle, overlooking a bay of the Irish Sea. Across the bay toward the north lies the little town of Kirkcudbright, a seaport of the county of the same name, in which both estates are situated. Arbigland, occupying a verdant plateau among the mountains, which slope upward from the rugged Solway shore, is situated in the parish of Kirkbean at the other end of the county some fifteen miles away.

Upon inheriting the latter estate, Robert Craik, country squire and member of Parliament, engaged John Paul, a landscape gardener of the town of Leith, to lay out the property. George Paul, his brother, was employed in a similar capacity at Saint Mary's Isle. The two brothers belonged to a family long resident in

Fife; but their father had removed to Leith, and had kept what was called a "mail garden"—a combination of tavern and market-garden—in that town. This business the sons inherited from their father, but, having become versed in the higher forms of landscape gardening, they abandoned the tavern and soon obtained advantageous positions in the practice of their new profession on the two estates.

Shortly before entering the service of Mr. Craik, John Paul married Jeannie McDuff, a daughter of a family of free landholders long resident in the county. The children of the family were seven: William, the eldest son; Elizabeth, who died unmarried; Jane, who became the wife of Mr. Taylor, a watchmaker in Dumfries; Mary Ann, first married to Mr. Young and secondly to Mr. Lowden; two other children, who died in infancy; and John Paul, the fifth of the surviving children, who first saw the light, according to the statement of his relatives, on July 6, 1747. This son is known to history as John Paul Jones.

The profession of landscape gardening was held in high repute in Scotland in those days, and was followed by a superior class of men, who invariably enjoyed the confidence and respect of their employers. That the family of John Paul were admitted to terms of intimacy and friendship with their patron is attested by letters of Paul Jones himself to Mr. Craik, as well as by those of his niece, Jane Taylor, who refers to Miss Helen Craik, a daughter of the house, as her companion and life-long correspondent.

The mother of the illustrious son, who was destined

to attract so much attention to her humble family and estate, received with her children and grandchildren that care for her necessities from her master, both before and after her husband's early death, which was habitually given by Scotch landlords to their tenants and servants. George Paul's master, the octogenarian, John Raglan, third Earl of Selkirk, was for the most part an absentee, residing at Edinburgh. Paul Jones's earliest recollections, according to his own statement,<sup>1</sup> were not of Arbigland, but of Saint Mary's Isle, where, in the care of his reputed father's brother, he evidently spent his earliest years. There in its gardens, on its wooded shore, and in the neighboring village of Kirkcudbright, he roamed at will, for after the death of the old earl, in 1744, George Paul still remained in charge of the estate, in the absence of the new owner. Some six years later he removed with all his family to Kirkcudbright, where, until his death in 1753, he kept a nursery.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that George Paul was employed as gardener to the third Lord Selkirk has never been mentioned by any of the biographers of Paul Jones, but it has great significance in accounting for the many rumors and printed statements in Scotch school-books and biographical dictionaries which have connected him

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of Thomas Chase," chap. II.

<sup>2</sup> Notes made by W. C. McCleod, of Kirkcudbright, bundle II, no. 31: "Summons at the instance of William Millar seedman in Abbey of Holy Rood House, against George John Elizabeth and Margaret Paul and Andrew White Boatman husband of the said Margaret Paul for his interest as heirs and executors of the deceased George Paul gardiner in Kircudbright for 14 2 5. sterling to be paid to the said William Millar with execution thereof and Bill therein narrated dated Oct 22 1750. October 30 1753."

with Saint Mary's Isle, and for his own later and singular attitude toward the Selkirk family.

Always within sight of blue water, whether at Saint Mary's Isle or at his mother's cottage at Arbigland, on the shores of the firth, his early taste for a seafaring life was naturally fostered. From the slopes of Arbigland the child could watch the sailing of the ships and the tide as it heaved up the Solway. To the north his eyes dwelt on the granite walls of Criffel. To the south, across the dividing arm of the sea, he could descry the dim blue shapes of the English mountains, Helvellyn, Skiddaw, and the Saddleback. The region is full of the romantic associations of border warfare, its heights still crowned with the castles of Scotland's bold defenders. The mountains told their tales of prowess to the dreaming boy, and the beckoning sea lured him to adventure.

While yet a tiny child it was his custom to wander off to the Carsethorn at the mouth of the River Nith, where he listened to the stories of the mariners. From them he learned his first skill in managing his little sail-boat and conceived his first interest in America. The village legends still alive at Kirkcudbright bear witness to his early talent for seamanship when he was yet more child than boy. Words of command caught from the lips of his sailor-teachers he was wont to repeat to a company of subjugated playfellows assembled in their mimic ships, while he assumed a superior place upon a rocky eminence on the shore and in a loud voice directed the manœuvres; and often he would launch his little boat alone upon the waters,

**THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN PAUL JONES AT ARBIGLAND, SCOTLAND.**



calling out to his imaginary crew in words of authority and command—the hero in miniature, prophetic and engaging picture!

As he grew older he attended the parish school of Kirkbean and was proficient in his studies; but a roving spirit was in the air, and the lad soon gave promise of unusual independence and an active imagination. It was the day of England's imperial expansion, and many of her sons were moved to leave their home shores on errands of glory or of gain. William, his eldest brother, early departed for America. A son of George Paul also emigrated to Charleston, South Carolina, and settled there as a merchant, where Paul Jones's youngest sister, Mary Ann, was destined to reside as the wife of Mr. Lowden, also a merchant in that city.

Not only did the sons of the two gardeners depart for the new land across the seas, but a son of Robert Craik as well was caught with the adventuresome contagion, and against his father's will decided to cast in his lot with the already rebellious colonists. This son, illegitimate, but acknowledged and protected by his father until this act of disobedience, became that distinguished Doctor Craik, of Alexandria, Washington's trusted physician as well as friend and legatee.

At the early age of twelve John Paul was taken from his lessons and apprenticed to Mr. Younger, a merchant in the American trade, residing in the English port of Whitehaven, across the firth. By him he was taken aboard the ship *Friendship*, bound for the Rappahannock, in Virginia. The *Friendship* anchored a few miles



only from Fredericksburg, where his brother William had made his home, and with his brother he passed his time while he was in port. His romantic sympathy with America, which he had imbibed while still a child in Scotland, was now still further fostered by his residence in America itself, "the country of his fond predilection," as he always called it, "since his earliest boyhood." In the half-settled colony of Virginia there were undoubtedly many opportunities for adventure of all sorts most tempting to John Paul's active and imaginative mind. But during the years of his apprenticeship he spent all of his time while in port, both in Virginia and at home in Scotland, in the assiduous study of his chosen profession. His aggressive, acquisitive mind was already busily at work searching whatever work of navigation he could lay hands on. Still hardly more than a child, he realized, with the same precocious wisdom which Hamilton showed at a similar age, that a foundation of wide knowledge was imperative for one who would win his spurs in world adventure.

During these years he returned for brief periods only to Scotland, where at the termination of one of his voyages he found himself thrown out of employment, owing to the failure of his employer, Mr. Younger. Having been fortunate enough, while still a mere lad, to have engaged the interest of the Duke of Queensbury, who, while on a visit to his brother-in-law, the third Lord Selkirk, had noticed him in the garden of Saint Mary's Isle, young Paul now applied to him for assistance, with the result that the duke recommended

him to a commander in the royal navy, who appointed him to a position as acting midshipman in the service. He retained this position for several years, gaining in valuable experience and that intimacy with "many officers of note in the British Navy" to which he refers in his later letters to Robert Morris<sup>1</sup> in regard to the establishment of the navy of America.

A further reference, which could only pertain to this period in Jones's life, is found in a paper prepared in the year 1783 for Morris, in which he states that he had "sailed before this revolution in armed ships and frigates." These plain statements, coupled with the familiarity he showed with the rules and training of the British naval officers, as most usefully employed in the drilling of the raw colonial seamen on the flagship<sup>2</sup> of the first American fleet, have never been accounted for by any of his biographers.

The facts which are now presented for the first time furnish a highly satisfactory as well as interesting explanation of Jones's statements, and the evidence is complete. The letters in which he makes these singular and hitherto mysterious references were written in the earliest period of his American service, many years before his glorious experience in Europe had raised him to a position where he could have had any opportunity of intimacy with "British officers of note," and then only after the close of the war in which he had fought on the American side.

A statement of the facts in regard to Jones's service

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Robert Morris, September 4, 1776.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Joseph Hewes, May 19, 1776.

in the British navy is found in a review of Sherburne's "Life of Paul Jones" printed in a number of the *United States Literary Gazette* of the year 1825. This was a well-known monthly magazine published in New York City, and the review appeared in its columns immediately after the production of Sherburne's work. It contains a contemporary opinion of Jones's life and character, with quotations from statements made to the reviewer by a living and intimate acquaintance of Paul Jones. The reviewer prints a letter written at his request by this friend of Jones's, and assures his readers that the author's veracity is unquestionable. He comments upon the paucity of personal information concerning Jones in Sherburne's work, saying that the author should have taken pains to gain information from individuals still living who had known Jones personally.

The reviewer writes:

Although Mr. Sherburne states that Lord Selkirk knew nothing of Paul Jones or his father, a gentleman who was a fellow lodger with the Chevalier in Paris, had it from himself that his father was the gardener of Lord Selkirk, and that the old Duke of Queensbury who was an occasional visitor at Lord Selkirk's, had noticed him while taking walks in the garden, and patted him on the head, and that the Duke subsequently procured him a midshipman's warrant and placed him in the Royal Navy.<sup>1</sup>

The above statement is the only one made by Paul Jones in regard to his parentage.

The letter of Jones's fellow-lodger, with its intimate

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A.

details and ample information, evidently supplied to him first-hand from the lips of Jones himself, deserves the most careful consideration.

DEAR SIR:—

I have gone through the life and character of Paul Jones by Mr. Sherburne which you kindly sent me. It appears to be as correctly given as the materials from which it is selected and the time which has elapsed since the circumstances occurred would permit.

If my memory is faithful, Commodore Jones told me soon after his return from Russia, that his parents were in obscure situations. That by accident he was known to the old late Duke of Queensbury, who introduced him in early life to a commander in the British Navy. That he was placed on board a British Man-of-War as acting midshipman, where he continued some time; how long I do not remember, but long enough to perceive that family interest had more influence than personal merit. His juniors were promoted while he remained unnoticed; this determined him to enter the merchant service where he continued until about two years before the Revolution commenced. So that at the time he engaged in our service he stood in the same position in regard to England with every native American. A recurrence to the correspondence of Lieutenant Jones with the Honorable Mr. Hewes I think will fully prove that he had previously received some education in the profession in which he so eminently distinguished himself during our Revolutionary War.<sup>1</sup>

Following the words of Jones's statement that the Duke of Queensbury met him at Saint Mary's Isle and "subsequently" procured him his appointment in the

<sup>1</sup> For the rest of this letter, see Appendix A.

British navy, it is safe to assume that the duke's interest dated from the time when he came across the promising child in the garden of Lord Selkirk's estate, and that it was not until after young Paul's release from his apprenticeship to Mr. Younger and his ensuing application for assistance to the duke that he recommended him for the position in the navy.

On leaving the navy he engaged as third mate on the slaver *King George* at Whitehaven, and afterward was employed as chief mate on another slaver, the *Two Friends*. His prompt advancement to the latter responsible position is conclusive evidence of his already accomplished seamanship and of his firm and reliable character.

During the years of his voyages he visited not only the West India islands, but also the coasts of Africa and Spain. He had been forced to witness much cruelty during the periods he passed in this employment, and it is not surprising to learn, on the authority of his relatives, that as he grew to manhood he was unable to countenance the enormities of a trade which was the foundation of many of the large fortunes of Liverpool and Glasgow as well as those of the British colonies in America.

In this attitude he showed a degree of high-mindedness far in advance of his time, but after two years in this uncongenial service, he abandoned his position in uncontrollable disgust and found himself in Jamaica in the year 1768 alone and without employment. While waiting for a passage back to Scotland he accepted a position as an actor in the company of John Moody, which was then playing in Jamaica. Moody

was a well-known Irish actor who had himself spent several years in the English islands playing "Hamlet" and other Shakespearian rôles. He returned to England in the year 1759 and there gained great reputation through his character parts. A few years later he sent a theatrical company bearing his name to the West Indies. In this company the young John Paul was engaged for a brief period. This fact has been curiously made known in the handwriting of John Philip Kemble, Moody's great contemporary and intimate friend. In a note appended to the title of a life of Jones, included in a catalogue of his library, Kemble states that "This celebrated man was an actor in the same company with Mr. Moody in Jamaica, and made his first appearance on the stage in the character of the young *Bevil* in 'The Conscious Lovers.'"

This temporary employment did not strongly appeal to the young sailor, or wean him from his love of the sea, for he soon engaged passage on board the *John*, of Kirkcudbright, and started on his voyage back to Scotland. During the passage, both officers, Captain MacCadam and his first mate, died of fever, and there being no one else on board capable of taking command, the young John Paul brought the vessel safely into port. This unexpected opportunity brought him into high favor with the owners of the ship, Currie Beck & Company, a firm of West India merchants resident in Kirkcudbright, and he was forthwith appointed master and supercargo of the *John*.

Thus promptly he received reward for his abandonment of the lucrative but abominable slave-trade,

in the shape of an advantageous connection with reputable merchants and his first full command of a ship. The first voyage which he made as master of the *John* was conducted successfully, but on the second, while he was engaged in loading his vessel at the island of Tobago, he was compelled to flog a disobedient sailor, with results which were destined to involve him in serious complications and difficulties.

This was in the spring of 1770, while John Paul was unloading the cargo he had brought from Scotland. The carpenter of the *John* was lazy, disrespectful to his commander, and finally openly mutinous. After various ineffectual efforts to control him, Paul finally resorted to the method, then in general use, of flogging the delinquent. The man, whose name was Mungo Maxwell, went before James Simpson, judge of a vice-admiralty court then in session in Tobago, and made a complaint. The judge examined the man's stripes, which he found of no importance, and dismissed the complaint as frivolous. Six weeks later, in perfect health, Maxwell shipped on board a Barcelona packet and left the island. Paul remained in the West Indies for a number of months, engaged in occupations which he set forth in the following letter to his patron, Mr. Craik:

ST. GEORGE, GRANADA,  
5th of August, 1770.

SIR:—

Common report here says that my owners are going to finish their connections in the West Indies as fast as possible. How far this is true, I shall not pretend to

NOTES IN JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE'S HANDWRITING, STATING THAT JONES WAS AN ACTOR IN JAMAICA.





judge, but should that really prove the case, you know the disadvantages I must of course labor under. These, however, would not have been so great had I been acquainted with the matter sooner, as in that case I believe I could have made interest with some gentlemen here to have been concerned with me in the large ship out of London, and as these gentlemen have estates in this and the adjoining Islands I should have been able to make two voyages every year, and always have a full ship out and home. However, I by no means repine, as it is a maxim with me to do my best, and leave the rest with Providence.

I shall take no step whatever without your knowledge and approbation. I have had several very severe fevers lately which have reduced me a good deal, though I am now perfectly recovered.

I must beg you to supply my mother should she want anything, as I well know your readiness.

I hope yourself and family enjoy health and happiness.

Sir, Yours always,

JOHN PAUL.

Although far from comprehending his own very unusual endowments at this early period, his common-sense and practical ability evidently impressed all those with whom he came in contact, and the candor and sincerity of his demeanor invariably made him friends. He was still very youthful, self-educated, humble in birth, and only the hired commander of a small Scotch merchantman, yet he enjoyed close and friendly relations with the leading men and merchants of Tobago.

This island is the southernmost of the Windward group and lies slightly north of Trinidad. Being moun-

tainous and salubrious in climate, it had been brought to a high state of cultivation by the successive colonists of France and England who had occupied it. Its shape, volcanic, like its sister islands, was like the green mound of a melon, with fertile valleys running in deep indentations from its summit to the water's rim. Wide mansion-houses, built of English brick and perched on eminences half-way up the slope, looked out upon the surrounding ocean and down upon the little capital town of Scarborough, on the southwestern corner of the island, at the edge of Rockley Bay. Here the business and the government of Tobago were conducted, and in this bay the young John Paul was wont to moor his ship during the long intervals between his outward and home voyages. It was during these leisurely months that he made his friendships with Judge Simpson and Governor Young, with Mr. Hamilton, of the Grange, and with Mr. Stewart and his family, of Orange Valley, and with those gentlemen planters in the neighboring island of Granada of whom he spoke to Mr. Craik.

In the latter part of this year (1770), having brought the *John* back to Scotland, he was stopping for a time at the port of Kirkcudbright, and applied for admission to the lodge of Freemasons of that town. The letter in which he made his application for admission is preserved in fac-simile at Douglas Castle, at Saint Mary's Isle. It is an earnest attempt at the formal phraseology which he deemed the occasion demanded. He spells "regard," "regaird," with a hint of the Scotch brogue which characterized his speech at this time,

and there are other instances of misspelling which do not occur in the elegant letters of his later years.

He learned soon after his arrival that the rumor of Currie Beck's intention of dissolving partnership was correct, and again found himself without employment. This turn in his affairs was no more than he had anticipated, but a very painful announcement awaited him for which he was entirely unprepared. He learned that Mungo Maxwell had died on board the *Barcelona* ship a short time after he left Tobago and that the responsibility of the sailor's death was laid at his door. Relations of Maxwell residing in a neighboring county persistently spread the rumor that John Paul was responsible for his death, and continually threatened to cause his arrest. Added to this revengeful threat was the jealousy of his neighbors and shipmates, who resented his rapid advancement in his career. The rumor spread persistently, his family was humiliated, and to his intense grief he found that his patron, Mr. Craik, also gave credence to the malicious report.

He asked and received an honorable discharge from the owners of the *John*, which proved his good standing with his former employers. This document is dated April 1, 1771. Subsequent to this he occupied himself during the period of about six months in local trading with the Isle of Man. His traducers have stated that this was a smuggling trade, but his own emphatic denial of this accusation is supported by the records preserved in the customs books of the town of Douglas. The very first entry of goods shipped from England to the Isle of Man after it became the property of the crown stands in John Paul's name.

During the whole of this period he dwelt under a cloud of evil report, and awaited openly a direct attack from his accusers, ready to face the verdict of a British jury and eager to clear his name from suspicion. Believing at last that no one of his accusers would dare openly to confront him, he nevertheless took ship again for the West Indies for the purpose of gathering proofs to refute definitely these damaging accusations.

When he arrived in the island of Tobago, he found no difficulty whatever in procuring the necessary evidence. His friends, Judge Simpson and William Young, the governor, were both entirely willing to assist him in his emergency. Judge Simpson furnished him with the needful affidavit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Before the Honorable Lieutenant Governor, William Young, Esquire of the Island:—

Aforesaid personally appeared, James Simpson Esquire, who, being duly sworn upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God;

DEPOSETH and SAITH:

THAT: Sometime about the beginning of May, in the year of our Lord, 1770, a person in the habit of a sailor, came to this deponent, who was at that time Judge Surrogate of the Court of Vice Admiralty for the Island aforesaid, with a complaint against John Paul, commander of a Brigantine then lying in Rockley Bay of said Island, for having beat the then complainant who belonged to the said John Paul's vessel; at the same time showing deponent his shoulders which had there the marks of several stripes, but none that were either mortal or dangerous, to the best of this deponent's opinion and belief.

And this deponent further saith—That he did summon the said John Paul before him, who in his vindication alleged that the said complainant had on all occasions proved very ill qualified for, as well as very negligent in his duties, and also that he was very lazy and inactive in the execution of his, the said John Paul's lawful command. At the same time declaring his sorrow for having corrected the complainant; and this deponent further saith: That having dismissed the complaint as frivolous, the complainant as this deponent believes, returned to his duty and this deponent further saith:—That he has since understood that the said complainant died afterwards on board of a different vessel on her passage to some of the leeward Islands, and that the said John

Armed with this exculpatory document, John Paul again returned to England, and on the day after his arrival wrote his family of the result of his voyage:

LONDON, 24th September 1772.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTERS:—

I only arrived here last night from the Grenadas; I have had but poor health during the voyage, and my success in it not having equalled my first sanguine expectations, has added very much to the asperity of my misfortunes, and I am well assured was the cause of my loss of health. I am now however better, and I trust Providence will soon put me in the way to get bread, and (which is far my greatest happiness) be serviceable to my poor but much valued friends. I am able to give you no account of my future proceedings, as they depend upon circumstances which are not fully determined.

I have enclosed you a copy of an affidavit made before Governor Young by the Judge of the Court of Vice Admiralty at Tobago, by which you will see with how little reason my life has been thirsted after, and which is much dearer to me, my honor, by maliciously loading my fair character with obloquy and vile aspersions. I believe there are few who are hard hearted enough to think I have not long since given the world every satisfaction in my power, being conscious of my

Paul as this deponent is informed, has been accused in Great Britain as the immediate author of the said complainant's death, by means of the said stripes hereinbefore mentioned.

This accusation, this deponent, for the sake of humanity, in the most solemn manner declares and believes to be in his judgment without any just foundation as far as relates to the stripes before mentioned; which this deponent very particularly examined, and

Further this deponent saith not.

JAMES SIMPSON.

Sworn before me,

This 30th day of June, 1772

WILLIAM YOUNG.

innocence before Heaven, who will one day judge even my Judges. I staked my honor, life and fortune for six long months on the verdict of a British Jury, notwithstanding I was sensible of the general prejudices which ran against me; but after all, none of my accusers had the courage to confront me. Yet I am willing to convince the world, if reason and facts will do it, that they have no foundation for their harsh treatment. I mean to send Mr. Craik a copy properly proved, as his nice feelings will not perhaps be otherwise satisfied. In the meantime, if you please, you may show him the enclosed. His ungracious conduct to me before I left Scotland I have not yet been able to get the better of; every person of feeling must think meanly of adding to the load of the afflicted. It is true I bore it with seem unconcern, but Heaven can witness for me that I suffered the more on that very account. But enough of this!

The dominant qualities of Paul Jones's character, his regard for reputation, keen sensitiveness of feeling, and strong imagination, reacting, as they never failed to do, upon a singularly responsive physical organization, were already evident in this early letter. His care for his "poor but valued friends," to whose support he was already in the habit of contributing, is the best proof of his loyal and affectionate disposition. No further evidence is necessary to prove his innocence of charges which were many times revived against him, or of the intensity of his suffering from the obloquy which was cast most unjustly upon his name. He never again wrote to Mr. Craik, who, his relatives state, was afterward entirely convinced of his innocence. He never again visited his birthplace in Scotland; he never saw

his family again. He busied himself with his affairs in London, and, not content with the evidence of Judge Simpson, he obtained from James Eastment, the captain of the ship on which Mungo Maxwell died, the following affidavit, which testified to the manner and cause of the sailor's death:

James Eastment mariner and late master of the Barcelona Packet, maketh oath and saith that Mungo Maxwell carpenter formerly on board the *John*, Captain Paul, Master, came in good health on board his, this deponent's said vessel, then lying in Great Rockley Bay, in the island of Tobago, about the middle of the month of June in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy, in the capacity of a carpenter aforesaid.

That he acted as such in every respect in perfect health for some time after he came on board this deponents said vessel, the Barcelona Packet after which he was taken ill of a fever and lowness of spirits, which continued for four or five days, when he died on board the said vessel during her passage from Tobago to Antigua.

And this deponent further saith that he never heard the said Mungo Maxwell complain of having received any ill usage from the said Captain John Paul; but that he, this deponent verily believes that said Mungo Maxwell's death was occasioned by a fever and lowness of spirits as aforesaid, and not by or through any other cause or causes whatsoever.

This document John Paul deposited with the then Lord Mayor of London, on the 30th of January, 1773.



## CHAPTER II

### PERIOD OF ADVENTURE

YOUNG PAUL had evidently succeeded in establishing his credit with reliable merchants during the period of his trading with the Isle of Man, for he now was able to secure the necessary advance to enable him to purchase the "large London ship," of which he had written to Mr. Craik, and to start out in business for himself. He purchased the *Betsey*, a London merchantman, and, having loaded her at Cork, set sail for the West Indies in the early part of the year 1773. In April he was again in the bay of Tobago. As he had succeeded in procuring his ship by his own unaided exertions, he now easily induced Archibald Stuart, Esq., a planter in the island, to enter into partnership with him. He invested the proceeds of the sale of his original cargo in the purchase of West Indian merchandise, and paid off his chief officers, but he hoped to be able to defer payment of his seamen until he had realized on his return cargo in England. By such methods he ran the risk of losing his crew, and, as the event proved, he paid dearly for his temerity. The sailors murmured and refused to be placated by the promises of gifts of clothing with which, as he himself admits, he attempted to conciliate them. Under these circumstances he made all haste to finish his loading and put to sea, but on coming aboard one morning he found himself confronted by a well-organized plot on

the part of his drunken and dissatisfied crew to desert the ship in a body.

Just freed from the serious difficulties caused by his chastisement of Mungo Maxwell, it may well be believed that he had no desire to become involved in further trouble. But a fatality of the worst and most unexpected kind awaited him. In defending himself from a determined and murderous attack made by the ringleader of the mutiny, he was unfortunate enough to kill the man. This second and separate incident of trouble with his sailors, with its immediately fatal consequences, has never been known to any of his biographers. In the year 1906 an account of this occurrence was discovered in a letter to Benjamin Franklin, in the well-known handwriting of Paul Jones himself. This document was one of a collection of thirteen thousand letters written to Franklin, and bequeathed about the year 1850 to the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia by the son of George Fox, who had received it from Franklin's grandson. For more than half a century this remarkable letter lay in the vaults of the society unnoticed. Under a recently appointed librarian, the long-delayed task of cataloguing the enormous mass of documents was initiated and the truth about this important event in Paul Jones's life brought to light. This letter illumines the period of his life which has always been obscure to his biographers, gives the reason for his temporary abandonment of a sea career, and explains in large measure his change of name. The account written to Franklin relates the incident in detail:

L'ORIENT, *March 6th*, 1779.

HONORED AND DEAR SIR:—

The mystery which you so delicately mention in your much esteemed favor of the 24th ult.—it has been my intention for more than Twelve months past to communicate to you; which however I have put off from time to time on reflecting that the Account must give you more pain than pleasure:—yet had I not, on my sudden departure from hence for Paris, inadvertently neglected to take with me the Original Paper whereof the inclosed is a Copy. I certainly should then have put it in your hands.—The subject at the beginning of the War was communicated to sundry Members of Congress among whom I may mention Mr. Hewes of No. Carolina and Mr. Morris of Philadelphia; and to various other persons in America before and Since.—It was the advice of my friend Gov. Young among many others, when that great Misfortune of my Life happened, that I should retire Incog. to the continent of America, and remain there until an Admiralty Commission should arrive in the Island, and then return.—I had waited that event eighteen months before Swords were drawn and the Ports of the Continent were Shut.

It had been my intention from the time of my misfortune to quit the sea service altogether, and, after standing Trial, as I had the means, to purchase some small tracts of Land on the Continent, which had been my favorite Country from the age of thirteen, when I first saw it.—I had settled my future place of retirement in “calm contemplation and Poetic ease.”

I could have no views of protection from a new Government, and therefore as I adhered to my first resolution of returning to the West Indies, to Stand Trial, and to Settle my affairs there as soon as peace should be restored to the Continent, it was the advice of my

friends that I should till that wished event might be brought about, remain Incog.—

. . . . .  
It may be said that I have been unfortunate—but it cannot be made appear that I have ever, even in the weakest Moment of my Life been capable of a Base or a mean Action.

I am with grateful and real affection and respect,  
Honored and Dear Sir  
Your very obliged  
Very obedient  
Very humble servant  
JOHN PAUL JONES.

The enclosure referred to above is as follows:

P. S. The Master of a West India ship from London had occasion to ship sundry seamen at the Island where he landed—one of whom in particular behaved himself very ill—He was a—principal in Embezzling the Master's Liquor—He got frequently drunk—He neglected and even refused his duty with much insolence.—He stirred up the rest of the crew to act in the Same manner and was their avowed Ringleader.

As the Master's engagements were of such a nature that his all depended upon dispatch, he gave his Crew very reasonable encouragement,—They had plenty of good Provision and were in other respects well used.—Notwithstanding of which one forenoon when the Master came on Board he found that the Crew had formed or were then forming a plot to desert the ship.—As the Master was walking aft the Ringleader rushed up from the steerage and stopped him with the grossest abuse that vulgarism could dictate—because, as he pretended, the Master had sailed his ship fourteen Months without paying wages.—The fellow having sometime be-

fore complained that he wanted cloaths, the Master now gave him Frocks and Trousers telling him to go about his duty and to inform himself better—for that what he had said was not so—.But mildness had no good effect, for while the Master was distributing Cloathing to some of the rest who were also in want, the first conveyed his things into the Boat and another of the Crew was following his example, till observing that the Master had an eye upon their proceedings, they Sneaked back into the ship—They remained quiet for a short space.—But the Ringleader soon broke out again with Oaths and insisted on having the boat and quitting the Ship—This the Master refused, but offered to give up his agreement if a Man could be found to serve in his room. The disturber Swore with horrid imprecations that he would take away the Boat by force!—and for that purpose actually rushed over the Gangway, bidding the Master the most contemptuous defiance!—Upon the Master's stepping to prevent this the Man (having threw his strength) leapt into the Ship and forced him into the Cabin, using at the time language and attitudes too indecent to be mentioned, and charging him not to shew his Nose upon Deck again till the Boat was gone at his utmost peril.—The Master searched the Cabin for a stick, but not finding one, and his Sword, by chance being on the Table, he took it up in hopes that the sight of it would intimidate the Man into submission.—The Man had by this time descended the Gangway within a step of the boat, so that it would have been impossible to prevent his Elopement had he persisted—But he now re-entered the Ship breathing Vengeance, and, totally regardless of the Sword, tho within its reach, turned his back towards the Master, ran on the Main Deck, Armed himself with a Bludgeon with which he returned to the quarter Deck and attacked the Master. The Master was thunder

Struck with surprise, for he had considered the Man's ravings as the natural effect of disappointed Rage which would soon subside of itself.—But now his sole expedient was to prevent bad consequences by returning again to the Cabin;—and this he endeavored to do as fast as possible by retiring backwards in a posture of defence.—But alas! what is human foresight.—The after Hatchway was uncovered and lay in a direct line between the Master's back and the cabin door, but the momentary duration of the attack did not admit of his recollecting that circumstance before his heel came in contact with the Hatchway, which obliged him to make a—Sudden Stop.—Unhappily at that instant the assailant's arm being high raised, he threw his Body forward to reach the Master's head with the descending Blow—The fatal and unavoidable consequence of which was his rushing upon the Sword's Point.

After this melancholy accident the Master went Publickly to a Justice of the Peace and offered to Surrender as his Prisoner.—The Justice who called himself the Masters friend, persuaded him to withdraw and Said it was unnecessary to Surrender before the day of Trial.—And the rest of the Masters friends who were present forced him to mount his Horse.—Two weeks before this the Chief Mate had been for the first time in his Life advanced to that Station—and yet unworthy as his conduct had been in it he now openly arrogated his unblushing pretensions to the Command, and to attain it associated with the Crew. The Testimony of such a combination may easily be imagined, conscious as they were of having embezzled the Masters property they were not likely to dwell on any circumstance that manifested their own dastardly and undutiful Conduct.—And as the second Mate a young Gentleman of worth lay Sick as well as all the inferior Officers and best disposed of the Crew, in all human

probability the Truth could not escape the grossest perversions.—Besides the Nature of the Case Subjected it to the cognizance of a Court Martial—And there was no Admiralty Commission then in the Government.—For these obvious reasons the Masters friends constrained him for a time to leave the Country.

N. B. The foregoing has been written in great haste to Save the Post.<sup>1</sup>

The kind friend and indulgent philosopher to whom this letter was addressed made in his reply no reference to the story it contained, except to say that it was simply a case of self-defence. There is no evidence that the confession, so painful to Paul Jones, ever altered in any way the friendship which existed between them. Legally, Paul Jones was absolutely justified in killing the ringleader of the mutiny, not only by the authority of the laws and customs then universally prevalent upon the sea, but also from the fact that the man's assault was evidently with intent to kill. The points of the affair which deserve consideration are Jones's own regret at the circumstance, his enforced flight, and the serious results which it entailed upon his character and career. No blame can properly be attached to the act, except in the fact (clearly indicated in his own narrative) that he unwisely believed that his crew would remain contented without their wages until such time as suited his convenience. It is impossible to read this account without a profound sympathy for the horror and dismay which must have overwhelmed

<sup>1</sup> The letter is dated March 6, 1779, and, belonging to a much later period, is not fully quoted at this point. It is given in its entirety in Appendix B.

his mind at this second catastrophe. The consternation of the men who had already proved themselves his friends, when he appeared before them staggering under the shock of this fatal and unpremeditated disaster, can well be imagined. Judge Simpson had already set his hand to the affidavit which cleared him of the responsibility of Mungo Maxwell's death. Governor Young had testified to the truth of the document, and this evidence had been put into Jones's hands on the occasion of his last visit to the island in the preceding year.

Although this evidence was strong enough to prevent an open attack, his enemies still whispered of his guilt, and hostile rumors were alive which, in the light of this second occurrence, would have strongly militated against him had he determined to face a trial at that time. The man's death was immediate, and Jones had been armed with a sword. The chief mate was jealous, ambitious of assuming command, and was known to be hostile. The evidence of the second mate and the other inferior officers was unobtainable, and the sailors, for the reasons above mentioned, were all against him. Under these seriously unfavorable conditions he nevertheless offered to surrender himself immediately, but Judge Simpson, still his friend, advised him that this was unnecessary until the day of trial. No court of admiralty was then in session on the island, and no date for the appointment of such a tribunal had been set. Jones's surrender or arrest might have meant indefinite imprisonment or a more serious sentence from an inferior court. It is not sur-



prising that a conference of his friends, held in secret, as may be inferred, in the face of such serious danger, should have resulted in the advice that Jones should mount his horse and, making his way to some other port, depart from the island.

It is difficult for those who have studied the character of Paul Jones to imagine this strict disciplinarian, this fighter by nature, "retiring backwards in a posture of defence" or seeking refuge from his mad and mutinous assailant in his cabin. But with the memory of Maxwell in his mind, it is entirely credible that he did attempt to avoid serious trouble by any means in his power.

Paul Jones never returned to Tobago to stand his trial, and the reasons for this are set forth in the letter. What does not appear in this account is the fact that rumors confounded the circumstances of this occurrence with the better-known incident of Mungo Maxwell, and Jones's acquittal for the one offence was therefore held to apply to the other.

A very rare old book, entitled "The Biographies of the Principal Military and Naval Heroes of America," written by one Thomas Wilson, of Philadelphia, published in that city in the year 1817, before the appearance of any of the "Lives" of Paul Jones, contains an account of both occurrences merged into one. It is very valuable in the confirmatory evidence it supplies of the defensive nature of his attack on the sailor and in the indication it gives of the manner in which the two incidents were confused in the rumors of the time:

CAPTAIN PAUL JONES

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This football of fortune was a native of Scotland. His father had been originally a gardener to the Earl of Selkirk.

Circumstances at present unknown led him to embrace a seafaring life at the age of fifteen. After he had served a regular apprenticeship he commanded a merchant vessel which was for many years engaged in the West India trade.

During a voyage to Tobago the crew of his vessel mutinied. He, in the incipency of the insurrection resorted to conciliatory measures with a view to restoring order; but his moderation being supposed to be the effect of fear, the mutineers grew bolder and renewed their threats. On this, Captain Paul armed himself with a small sword, posted himself on the quarterdeck and informed the mutineers that the most serious consequences would result if they should pass the after hatchway, and that an attempt to get on the quarterdeck would induce him and his officers to risk their own lives in endeavoring to effect their destruction. They were somewhat appalled by his decision; but some more desperate than the rest, determined to seize him, and armed with handspikes, crowbars, and axes, moved along the waist to the quarterdeck. The leader, on approaching Captain Paul, raised a handspike to strike him, and made the blow, but it was evaded and he missed his object; but was about to renew it, and when he lifted a second time, Captain Paul pierced the ruffian; he fell dead on the deck. The rest fled to the forecastle and some below deck; those who remained above were seized and put in irons; and those who had resisted the mutiny, being encouraged by the resolution of the Captain, secured the others below.

The voyage was prosecuted and they arrived at Tobago, where Captain Paul surrendered himself to the proper authority, with a demand that he should be tried for the death of the mutineer. The transaction excited considerable interest; but at length he obtained a formal trial wherein he was finally acquitted. What became of the mutineers we do not now recollect; but it is upwards of 30 years since we read the narrative.

Captain Paul had dispatched his ship under another officer to Europe while he awaited the trial, and after his acquittal returned to Europe. He landed in England where the story had preceded him with great exaggeration, and he was menaced with imprisonment and a new trial. In this dilemma he addressed his friends of the Scots House in Cork; described the prosecution he had experienced and the injustice of bringing him a second time to trial, contrary to the laws of England. In his friends he found advice and protection, and to escape injustice he determined to proceed to the American Continent where he added to his paternal name the *nomme de guerre* Jones.

It is in no way remarkable that the reports current in those troublous times, when ports were closed and correspondence uncertain and irregular, should have mingled the two incidents. They both occurred at Tobago, and the same authorities, Judge Simpson and Governor Young, were concerned in both. Jones, quite naturally, considered it needless to enlighten the general public in regard to the matter, but there are various mysterious references to it in intimate letters which none of his biographers have hitherto been able to explain. He always called it "the misfortune of my life," and it is evident that he never could forget it, but was

forced to call to his aid all his fortitude and philosophy to enable him to surmount the suffering which it caused him. At a later period, in referring to the distress which he suffered from his supersedure in rank, he says: "Its reality affects me more than all the former misfortunes of my life, some of them were perhaps brought about by my own misconduct—this I am sure was not." It is plain that he did not consider himself wholly innocent of the contributing cause of the fatality arising from the fact that he had not paid his crew in full, and was therefore partly responsible for their dissatisfaction.

He made a voluntary confession of the unfortunate occurrence at the outset of his friendship with Hewes and Morris, and was unwilling to continue his important relation with Franklin without making a similar confession to him.

The immediate results of this disaster were exceedingly serious. He was compelled to abandon the business which he had brought with such difficulty to a successful issue, and nearly penniless and in tragic haste to depart from the island. He left both ship and cargo in the hands of his partner and entered upon a truly melancholy period of homeless and nameless wandering. This period, lasting from June, 1773, to the winter of 1775, has been one of almost complete obscurity to all of his previous biographers. He fled from Tobago under an assumed name, and, unable openly to claim his rightful property, he emerged as John Paul Jones, a regularly appointed officer in the American navy. Two brief references exist in the letters of Jones himself

to throw some light upon this part of his life. One of these, found in a letter already printed in the Edinburgh and Sands biographies, was written in the spring of the year 1777, when Jones had advanced to a leading position in the American navy:

BOSTON, *4th May 1777.*

DEAR SIR.

After an unprofitable suspense of twenty months, (having subsisted on fifty pounds only during that time.) when my hopes of relief were entirely cut off, and there remained no possibility of my receiving wherewithal to subsist upon from my effects in your island, or in England, I at last had recourse to strangers for that aid and comfort which was denied me by those friends whom I had entrusted with my all. The good offices which are rendered to persons in their extreme need, ought to make a deep impression on grateful minds; in my case I feel the truth of that sentiment, and am bound by gratitude as well as honour to follow the fortunes of my late benefactors. I have lately seen Mr. Sication, (late manager of the estates of Arch. Stuart Esq.) who informed me that Mr. Ferguson had quitted Orange Valley, on being charged with the unjust application of the property of his employers. I have been and am extremely concerned at this account: I wish to disbelieve it, although it seems too much of a piece with the unfair advantage which, to all appearance he took of me, when he left me in exile, for twenty months, a prey to melancholy and want, and withheld my property, without writing a word of excuse for his conduct. Thus circumstanced I have taken the liberty of sending you a letter of attorney to Captain Cleaveland, who undertakes to deliver it himself, as he goes for Tobago via Martinico. You have enclosed a copy of a list of debts

acknowledged, which I received from Mr. Ferguson, when I saw you last at Orange Valley. You have also a list of debts contracted with me together with Ferguson's receipt. And there remained a considerable property unsold, besides some best Madeira wine which he had shipped for London. By the state of accounts which I sent to England, on my arrival in this continent there was a balance due to me from the ship *Betsey* of £909. 15s 3d. sterling. and in my account with Robert Young, Esq. 29 January 1773 there appeared a balance in my favor of 281 1s 8d. Sterling. These sums exceed my drafts and just debts together, so that if I am fairly dealt with, I ought to receive a considerable remittance from that quarter. You will please to observe, that there were nine pieces of coarse camblets shipped at Cork, over and above the quantity expressed in the bill of lading. It seems the shippers finding their mistake applied for the goods; and as I have been informed from Granada Mr. Ferguson laid hold of this opportunity to propagate a report that all the goods which I put into his hands were the property of that house in Cork. If this base suggestion hath gained belief, it accounts for all the neglect which I have experienced. But however my connexions are changed, my principles as an honest man of candour and integrity are the same; therefore should there not be a sufficiency of my property in England to answer my just debts, I declare that it is my first wish to make up such deficiency from my property in Tobago; and were even that to fall short, I am ready and willing to make full and ample remittances from hence upon hearing from you the true state of my affairs. As I hope my dear mother is still alive, I must inform you that I wish my property in Tobago or in England after paying my just debts to be applied for her support. Your own feelings, my dear sir, make it unnecessary for me to use argument to prevail with you

on this tender point. Any remittances which you may be enabled to make through the hands of my good friend Captain John Paliner of Cork, will be faithfully put into her hands. she hath several orphan grandchildren to provide for. I have made no apology for giving you this trouble; my situation will I trust obtain your free pardon. I am always with perfect esteem.

Dear sir.

Your very obliged, very obedient,  
And most humble servant.

J. PAUL JONES.

STUART MAWEY Esq.  
Tobago.

The reasons for his penniless condition during nearly all of this period of obscurity are here sufficiently accounted for in the evident dishonesty of the agent and resident manager of his partner, Archibald Stuart, in whose hands Jones had intrusted his share of the ship and merchandise, but there is no hint as to his whereabouts or occupation up to the time of his forming his new connections with the American Government. The other reference is in a letter printed in Force's "Archives"; although brief, it is exceedingly interesting in the indication it furnishes of the nature of his occupation during this time. It is dated the 18th November, 1776, when Jones was on board the *Providence*, off the coast of Nova Scotia, on the second of his independent and very successful cruises against the British possessions in Canada. He writes to Robert Smith, of Edenton, a partner of Joseph Hewes in the ship-building business and the United States prize agent of the State of North Carolina. He

announces that he is sending a prize to him in recognition of his gratitude to Joseph Hewes, and says: "I have seen and do esteem yourself, but I knew your brother James well when *I was myself a son of fortune*." The unquestionable confession of some period of adventure expressed in this phrase, and its significant grouping of this brother and himself in a similar occupation, of which he dares to speak on account of their mutual knowledge of its character, is exceedingly suggestive. What were they doing, these two intimate friends, when both were "sons of fortune"? An answer to this question exists and is contained in the printed recollections of one Thomas Chase, a Massachusetts sailor and privateersman, and afterward one of Jones's seamen on the *Alliance*, who dictated them to his grandson. These recollections, printed privately, were in the possession of the daughter of Thomas Chase the third, who took them down from the mouth of his grandfather. The story that they tell runs thus:

In September 1773, two years before the breaking out of the American Revolutionary War, the people living near Holmes's Hole Martha's Vineyard, were astonished to see a rather singular craft put into their port. Martha's Vineyard is an island, forming the southeastern extreme of the state of Massachusetts, and Holmes's Hole is its principal harbor. The vessel was a sharp, rakish, clipper built craft, painted entirely black, with no name whatever marked upon her. She carried three long nine-pounders, which could be moved to any part of her deck; one "long-tom" on a pivot and apparently a full supply of small arms of every description. She was a very fast sailor.



The crew seemed to consist of about forty men, mostly Spaniards with a few Portuguese among them. The captain announced himself as Paul Jones,<sup>1</sup> and said that as he was coasting along in the vicinity of Long Island, New York, he had had an encounter with a British craft which came very near taking him. Two or three of his crew and one officer, had been wounded in this encounter, and the officer soon after died. Whether the dying officer had requested to be buried on land, or whether it was merely Jones's wish to show his dead officer this special attention, did not appear; but he inquired whether he could find a man who could make a coffin for the dead sailor, and said he wished to give him a decent burial. He was directed to a stripling of nineteen or twenty years of age, who had the reputation of being unusually "handy with tools" and could even accomplish wonders with a common jack knife and a bit of wood. This youth's name was Thomas Chase; he was born on the island, and was a direct descendant of Thomas Mayhew, royal patentee and first Governor of that and the adjacent islands. Young Chase set about making the coffin, and while he was at work on the gruesome task, had numerous long conversations with Jones who appeared to have taken quite a fancy to the youth, and was very sociable and communicative.

At Captain Jones's request, the people of the Island turned out in good numbers to attend the stranger's funeral. Among the persons who attended that strange funeral was a girl in her teens named Desiré Luce. She was then the sweetheart, and afterwards became the wife of the youth who made the stranger's coffin. She saw at the funeral and at several other times during his few days stay on the Island, the "Captain Jones" who was so friendly with her sweetheart. Of course in the unusual circumstances, the Captain was thoroughly

scrutinized, and every person present had a good chance to form a deliberate opinion as to his personal appearance. He stood about five feet six inches high; he was stoutly built but not corpulent, and had a very broad chest and shoulders, and arms unusually and noticeably long for a man of his height. His weight was about one hundred and seventy five pounds; he was remarkably muscular, and seemed able to use almost all of his great strength in his sword arm. His complexion had been naturally light, but he was much weather-beaten at this time, having been afloat, as he said, about seventeen years, or ever since he was about fourteen years old. He had the kind of hair which country people call "sandy," but which had been probably made lighter by constant exposure to wind and sunshine; his eyes were bluish-gray. The muscles of his face were firm, giving great severity to his expression. Among his peculiarities was that of an uncommonly deep, strong, resonant and powerful voice, of that peculiar carrying quality which made it distinctly audible, even in the greatest noise and confusion.

Captain Jones remained several days on the Island after the burial of his shipmate, and amused himself by looking over the neighboring country and making several gunning expeditions, in which he included young Chase, who proved a better shot than himself.

The Captain and his crew made some purchases during their stay, paying duly for everything and conducting themselves in a perfectly civil and inoffensive manner, although Captain Jones told young Chase in private, that they were "a set of Spanish and Portugese desperadoes." They were under excellent control however, and no one had any reason to complain of their behaviour. He seemed never to try to keep a man who wanted to leave him at any port. One of his crew at this time, a Portugese who called himself "Joe Fred-

erick" as the nearest English approach to his name, decided to remain on the Island, and did so, with his captain's full consent. This man married there, and after a long life of adventure, for he later sailed again with Jones—died there, and his widow lived to be over ninety years old.

When Jones was ready to leave the Island, he engaged an old pilot to help him over Nantucket Shoals, young Chase accompanying. After two days, they bade adieu to Jones with the best of feeling on both sides, and when they last saw his vessel it was steering north-easterly as if meaning to double Cape Cod. As was afterwards learned, Jones soon returned to the Spanish West Indies, then his headquarters.

Two years after this occurrence at the breaking out of the American Revolution in 1775, young Chase shipped on board one of the first privateers fitted out by the Colonies. It chanced that within a few days, this ship in a blistering fog almost ran into a strong British man-of-war, was captured, and all her crew taken prisoners and carried to Plymouth, England, where in company with many other American prisoners—there were over seven hundred of them in all—they were held captive for more than two years. Then, by an exchange of prisoners, they were liberated and taken to L'Orient, in France, whence they hoped to ship for home. Here it happened, Paul Jones and young Chase met again and instantly recognized each other, and Chase shipped with Jones who was then in command of the *Bon Homme Richard* and wished to fill his ship with the liberated prisoners. Chase was in the fight between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Serapis*, as well as in many other engagements and knew Jones perhaps, as well as did any other man who ever sailed with him, as Jones appeared to have taken a special liking to him, telling him many personal details which he

seemed to tell few others, and in two or three instances, taking him on confidential expeditions, the details of which he did not trust to the mass of his crew.

Although of a generally stern and surly aspect, Jones had his seasons of friendly and confidential converse, when he spoke freely of his earlier life and his later adventures. The story he told of his childhood and youth seemed recited in good faith, and was adhered to with every appearance of veracity in all after allusions. Jones is said to have told an altogether different story to the American Authorities when he was seeking a naval command; but whatever he said afterwards, or whatever was said of him, it was evident that at this time he really believed himself to be an illegitimate son of the Earl of Selkirk, whose mansion was near Whitehaven, on the west coast of Scotland, near the border of England. He said that his first recollections were of the servants' quarters in the Earl's establishment; that he was called John Paul, and told that his father's name was Paul. He also said that he was ignorant as to the exact date of his birth.

Regarding his voyages in the slave-ships, Thomas Chase's narrative again supplies some interesting information:

On his arrival at Corunna, he fell in with an association of self-styled "merchants" and maritime rovers and desperadoes, who obtained their living and wealth by their lawless depredations on commerce, and whose predecessors had sailed the vague "Spanish main" for scores of years, and who, with their successors, continued to ravage the shipping of all commercial nations until the close of the Napoleonic wars.

Young as he was, he soon gained ascendancy over many of his associates who were older and more ex-

perienced in voyaging than himself, and before he was twenty years old, he was offered the command of a vessel to continue the same business, he of course to have a much larger share of the profits than before.

These reminiscences of Jones's earlier life, with many tales of stirring and dangerous adventure, were recited by him to young Chase, in the bluff captain's seasons of relaxation and social converse during their cruises together. Some of them were also heard by three other persons, who on one voyage all together, and on others separately, sailed under Jones. These three men were Thomas Field, Joe Frederick, and John Terry; this last was a boy born in Annapolis, Maryland, who served as a "powder-monkey" to Chase's gun, in the *Bon Homme Richard* fight.

The remainder of Chase's narrative, which contains an account of the *Ranger's* cruise and the descent upon Saint Mary's Isle, possesses no value as historical material, for the reason that he was during that time still a prisoner in England, and being no longer an eyewitness, relied for his statements on tradition and hearsay reports from other seamen. The brief account of the engagement with the *Serapis*, also contained in the narrative, furnishes no new material except as it includes some testimony in regard to Landais. Chase was on board the *Alliance* in the famous battle, but sailed for a short time under Jones when the latter took command of that vessel. None of the somewhat confused recollections of Chase's middle life, dictated when he was about seventy years old, have the value possessed by the early narrative, the details of which were impressed upon the old seaman's memory with indelible vitality

and accuracy. He had a warm admiration and feeling of personal friendship for Paul Jones, to which he testified up to the close of his long life. The recollections as orally dictated by Chase to his grandson were privately printed by him for preservation, in the year 1859, at Chesterfield, Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusions in regard to the historical accuracy of this narrative are highly favorable for the following reasons: The name of Thomas Chase is not only found in the roll-book of the *Alliance*, but the fact of his service in the American vessel is indubitably attested by the official records of the prize-money which was awarded to him by Congress.

The grandson of Thomas Chase, who took down these recollections from the lips of his grandfather, was a Methodist minister and a member of the Maine Methodist conference. In later life he read law and became a member of the Franklin County (Maine) bar. He was a lover of history, an accurate student, and an absolutely reliable reporter of the facts.

The great-granddaughter of Thomas Chase was the well-known writer, Elizabeth Akers,<sup>2</sup> lately resident in Tuckahoe, New York. Aside from the unques-

<sup>1</sup> Copies of this rare pamphlet are preserved in the Harvard Library and in the Newberry Library in Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Akers's verses are to be found in Griswold's and Stoddard's collection of poetry, in Whittier's "Three Centuries," in Bryant's "Poetry and Song," in Longfellow's "Poems of Places," and in Stedman's "Anthology." She was the widow of Paul Akers, the Maine sculptor, a sketch of whose life is to be found in H. T. Tuckerman's "American Artists." Mrs. Akers supplied the writer with the above information, and stated that the facts as related by Thomas Chase to her father were corroborated by Chase's widow, the Desiré Luce of the narrative, with whom she spent a summer in her early youth. Mrs. Akers died in 1911.

tionably reliable character of the individuals who furnished and transmitted this information, another and absolutely undeniable proof that Paul Jones actually made this visit to Martha's Vineyard is found in the fact that the Portuguese sailor who called himself Joe Frederick did not re-embark with Jones, but remained on the island and shortly after married a woman of that place. This woman never left the island, and in her old age received, as his widow, prize-money from the government for her husband's share in captures made during his subsequent services in the American squadron under Paul Jones. In addition to this fact, which is unexplainable except by the foregoing narrative, we have Jones's own admission in the letter to Robert Smith, of Edenton, that he, together with James Smith, had been at one time a "son of fortune."

There is also evidence of a fairly startling confirmatory character in another statement of Jones himself, made to Willie Jones, of North Carolina, when he was a guest in the latter's home, "The Grove," near Halifax, in the year 1775, that "he served his apprenticeship, in the African slave trade and later but under duress, in a straight out Pirate ship, both of which he threw up, as neither was congenial to his liking." This statement, known to Major Knox, of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, while he was also a guest at "The Grove," was repeated by Knox in his old age to Colonel Wharton Green,<sup>1</sup> ex-member of Congress from North Carolina, and now residing at Fayetteville, in that State. The statement, thus directly transmitted through only one intermediary,

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Green died in 1910.

the author in a letter from Colonel Green. Colonel Green had passed the age of eighty when he wrote the letter, and was himself a youth when he heard it from Major Knox in his extreme old age. The combined ages of the two men easily spans the time from 1775 to 1908, when Colonel Green recorded it, and the presumption that it was transmitted correctly in practically Jones's own words is greatly increased by the fact that it contained the expression "under duress." This expression, explanatory of Jones's presence on the "Pirate" ship, referred without question to the fatality at Tobago, when he killed the leader of the mutiny on board the *Betsey*, an incident which was entirely unknown to Colonel Green. Major Knox, a member of a well-known Virginia family, belonged to that class of perennial visitors in the hospitable homes of the South during the colonial period, and was exceedingly popular on account of his genial character and his inexhaustible fund of anecdote. "The Grove" was one of his favorite "homes," and there he was made acquainted with the facts and traditions of the family and its friends.

The probabilities in regard to this remarkable incident of Jones's descent upon Martha's Vineyard are that when he fled in haste from the port of Rockley Bay, after killing the mutineer, he "mounted his horse" and, riding to the southern shore of the island, made his way in some small boat to the neighboring island of Trinidad, which lies directly to the south of Tobago, only fifteen miles away. Here, in Spanish territory, he sought for an opportunity to get out of reach of the



dangers which so seriously threatened him, and, taking the first chance which offered, shipped aboard a "merchantman" and put to sea. The merchantman was armed and manned with a crew of Spanish and Portuguese desperadoes, and, according to his own statement, was really a pirate ship. Although by successive agreements—the "Treaty of America," in 1670, and that of Utrecht, in 1713—strong efforts had been made to wipe out piracy in the West Indies by the various nations of Europe, it broke out again during the maritime war between France and England, in 1740, and during the Seven Years' War, in which England and France as well as Spain were embroiled, their vessels attacked each other on the seas, and the rich West Indian merchant-ships became a prey to the commerce-destroying corsairs of all nations. By the treaty of Paris, in 1763, which concluded the Seven Years' War, an interregnum of peace began which lasted until the outbreak of the conflict between England and her American colonies, in which France, Spain, and the Netherlands were all again involved. During the intervening years the world was supposed to be at peace, but it was impossible entirely to control the piratical vessels which had so long been free to roam the West Indian seas, and in those distant waters they still carried on their lawless trade. The long animosity of Spain against England was still active, and the corsairs of that nation, although no longer bearing the murderous character of their celebrated predecessors who sailed the Spanish main, still attacked British merchantmen whenever they fell in with them.

The corsairs of France were also in the habit of taking defenceless American vessels coming from the French ports in the West Indies as late as the year 1797, in spite of the alliance of France with the United States.

When the general European war broke out again, in consequence of the conflict between England and America, piracy became again increasingly active, and continued to be practised by both French and Spanish vessels up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was for many years connived at by the inhabitants of the sea-coast towns of the Carolinas, and many respectable colonists themselves indulged in the pursuit. In the maritime colonies of the North the same leniency prevailed, the descendants of the buccaneers finding it no difficult matter to strike a bargain with the English Governor Fletcher, of old New York, who also permitted the merchants of his own domain to make what profit they could under what passed as the sanction of law. This sanction the ships and captains of the colony considered to be in force whenever England happened to be at war with France or Spain. The ship-owners of New York were on such excellent terms with the "Red Sea men," as the rovers of the sea were called in those days, that the pirate captain was a familiar figure in the streets and often an honored guest at the tables of the honest burghers. Many of the fortunes amassed during the latter part of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, not only in New York, but in Philadelphia and Boston, had their foundations in this picturesque trade.

The first American privateers who went to sea in

their own armed vessels at the beginning of the hostilities against the mother country, before the provincial assemblies issued letters of marque, were legally pirates, and ran the risk of the punishment meted out to such non-commissioned rovers of the sea. The American Government did not scruple to accept the services of the celebrated Lafitte in the defence of New Orleans in 1815. Two years later a military force was sent out to take possession of Amelia Island, the rendezvous of the pirates on the coast of Florida. During the years 1821 and 1822 as many as thirty-two Spanish piratical vessels were taken by American ships in the West Indian waters and off the coasts of Cuba, but, on account of a pretended blockade established by the Cuban authorities, American trading-vessels accused of violating it were captured with impunity by the pirates, and the American commanders appealed in vain for assistance to the Governor of Cuba in their attempt to bring them to justice.

In December, 1822, the secretary of the navy recommended to Congress that an important additional force should be sent to bring an end to the outrages which were committed against American commerce with the connivance of the Cuban Government, and in the following year Captain David Porter made a desperate attempt to track out and exterminate all piratical vessels, not only in the Cuban waters, but in the Gulf of Mexico and among the West Indian islands. He succeeded in obtaining the countenance and support of the Governor of Cuba, who had been unable without outside assistance to exercise the least control over the

pirates or the inhabitants of the island who were in league with them. Although compelled to follow the marauders among the reefs and inlets of the island coasts, in open boats and barges, and into the noisome jungles, whither they took refuge, Porter and his efficient subordinates finally succeeded in practically exterminating them. At the end of a six months' campaign, with a force decimated by yellow-fever and in a dangerously reduced condition of health, Porter was able to announce that "no piratical vessel larger than an open boat was left on the coast of Cuba or in the Gulf of Mexico." The ship on which Paul Jones embarked in the year 1773 was of no inconsiderable size, according to the description in Chase's narrative, and, as its head-quarters were the Spanish West Indies and it was manned with Spaniards, it was in all probability one of the numerous ships belonging to Spanish subjects which were still permitted to prey upon British commerce in the distant waters of the western hemisphere. No effectual measures were taken by the Spanish court to restrain them at this period or even later, when they attacked American vessels as well with a persistency born of long habit and the known connivance of the governors of the Spanish possessions in the New World. It is highly improbable that Jones was in command of the "privateer" or "merchant-man" when he first went to sea.<sup>1</sup>

Carrying only enough money for his immediate ne-

<sup>1</sup> The several Spanish names for pirates, armed smugglers, and privateers (*piratas*, *contrabandistas*, and *corsarios*) were used in ordinary parlance by the Spaniards as synonymous.

cessities, and compelled to conceal both his name and history, he was in no position to demand the command of the ship or to ask unnecessary questions as to its character or destination. It is probable, therefore, that he first shipped in a subordinate capacity, perhaps as mate, and that he became captain after the death of the officer, who lost his life in the encounter with the English ship off Long Island. The narrative of Thomas Chase states that he announced himself as a "special privateer," which was probably his way of admitting that the vessel bore no letter of marque from the Spanish Government. It is important to remember the condition of public opinion during this century of almost universal warfare in regard to these private commerce-destroying ships, and to recall that the distinction between pirate ships and privateers in those days was extremely hazy.

After the close of the Revolutionary War, in 1784, Franklin attempted to secure the adoption of articles, to be signed by England and the United States, for the discontinuance of privateering, which he declared was a remnant of piracy and very bad for the morals of his countrymen. Howsoever lax were the laws against piracy, howsoever leniently and sometimes admiringly it was regarded during those transition years when "might was still right" upon the high seas, Paul Jones did not and could not remain in the hated employment he had accepted in his emergency. It was entirely characteristic that he should have made no secret of the incidents of his life to the friends he found in America, particularly in regard to his tempo-

rary and enforced activity in a contraband trade which had been so long indulgently regarded by the well-known inhabitants of the community, but it was also highly characteristic that he should have immediately abandoned it, as he had his service in the slave-trade, in the revolt of a noble nature fitted for higher ends.

## CHAPTER III

### CHANGE OF NAME

It is impossible to approximate the date of Paul Jones's arrival in America after his cruise in the Spanish ship.

We know from his own statement that the unfortunate death of the mutineer was the cause which brought him into the colonies, and we learn from his letter to Franklin that his friends advised him to absent himself from Tobago until an admiralty court should be appointed in the island. If we believe that his disgust with the character of his employment probably caused him to leave the vessel at the expiration of her first cruise, and if we remember that he was steering his course toward the West Indies when he left Martha's Vineyard, in September, 1773, it seems probable that he arrived at the head-quarters of his ship somewhere about November of this year, as the voyage on a sailing vessel in those days took from a month to six weeks. Jones now found himself again without employment, and, deciding to take refuge in North America, he made his way to Edenton, a seaport on the coast of North Carolina, the residence of his friend James Smith, hoping to obtain from him the assistance and advice of which he stood so much in need.

He did not dare to go to his brother in Fredericksburg, because he was forced to retain his incognito, and dreaded a possible recognition from those whom he

had known there in former years. As there is nothing to indicate that he received any assistance at this time, we must assume that James Smith was absent from Edenton and that Paul Jones now found himself in great distress. Nearly penniless and unable to travel any distance from the sea-coast, he was forced to seek an asylum in some retired spot not far from Edenton, where, without news or remittances from his friends, he was left to pine in the deepest loneliness, a prey, as he bitterly expressed it, to "melancholy and want."

The probability that these are indeed the facts in regard to this obscure period in Jones's life is greatly increased by the first recorded testimony as to the place where he was first seen after his arrival in America as well as by his own references to this time contained in the above-quoted letter to his friend in Tobago. His early biographers were quite unable to discover the identity of those strangers who assisted him in his "extreme need," but a mass of tradition exists which furnishes full and credible information in regard to them. The descendants of these benefactors have fully testified to the manner in which Paul Jones was aided and protected by their distinguished ancestors, who belonged to the well-known Jones family of North Carolina, and resided near Albemarle Sound, on the same contraband coast where Jones landed in search of his comrade James Smith.<sup>1</sup>

On a day in the early part of the year 1775, Willie Jones came into the little town of Halifax, from his

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C.



neighboring estate, and found a young man sitting on a bench in front of the tavern, who had every appearance of the greatest dejection. "What is your name?" he asked him. "I have none," was the answer. "Where is your home?" he asked. "I have none," was again the reply. He then entered into further conversation with the stranger, and invited him forthwith to share his home, which he declared was "large enough for both of them."<sup>2</sup> This dejected stranger was none other than Paul Jones. Although several modern historians of his career have been aware of the traditions which connected him with the well-known Jones family of North Carolina, they have vainly sought for some records in his papers which would confirm these reports. The present writer, more fortunate in the search, discovered, in the year 1906, the desired evidence among Jones's MSS. in Washington, in the shape of a letter from Doctor John K. Read, of Goochland County, Virginia, written in the year 1778. It refers to a period when they were both guests at Willie Jones's place, "The Grove." The letter professes an enthusiastic admiration for Jones, expressed in the characteristic phraseology of the period: "Shall I tell you that I had fears that my friend had forgot me; but those fears were momentary and gave place to other feelings when I reflected on the many sentimental hours which passed between us at 'The Grove.'" This, then, was the refuge which Paul Jones found in the hour of his necessity. The man who so generously aided the home-

<sup>2</sup> His account is taken from the letter from Colonel Wharton Green referred to above, page 45.

**WILLIE JONES.**



less and penniless stranger was a brilliant and powerful figure in the Revolution, whose services have been strangely lost sight of in the fame of his greater contemporaries.

Willie (pronounced Wylie) Jones and his brother Allen were the sons of Robert Jones, the colonial agent of the enormous estates of Lord Granville in North Carolina. Until destroyed by Tarleton's soldiers, toward the close of the war, the paternal home of Willie and Allen Jones was the most splendid in the State. It stood in what Robin Jones in his will described as his "Manor Plantation," on the Occaneechey Neck in North Hampton County, near Albemarle Sound, in the centre of a large tract of land by the side of the river Roanoke. A very luxurious existence was established in the beautiful wilderness, with its virgin forests and its views of river and sea. The rich and powerful agent of Lord Granville built a house of wide rooms and marble staircases, filled it with English furniture and English plate, dressed elegantly with diamond buckles at his knees, drove out in a chariot, and at church was followed by an attendant slave to carry his book of prayer. As attorney-general to the province he attained fame by his fluent oratory, and made the speech of his life on the day he was compelled to suffer the amputation of his leg. The sons of this man were educated at Eton, inherited position and ample fortune, and became each powerful and distinguished in his own way. Allen Jones inherited the oratorical gifts of his father, and was known also for his military services; but Willie Jones was a practical statesman, and, according

to Moore, the historian of North Carolina, was to his State what Jefferson was to Virginia. The homes of the two brothers were situated a few miles distant from each other. "The Grove" was near the southern boundary of the little town of Halifax, on the banks of the Roanoke. Allen lived at "Mount Gallant," on the north bank of the river, at the head of the Roanoke Falls. Both Allen and Willie carried on the traditions of their father and entertained on their large estates with lavish generosity.

Willie Jones was a warm advocate of Jefferson's policy and the leading representative and mouth-piece of the opinions and thoughts of the whole colony. He had been a member of the general assemblies of North Carolina from 1770 until the year 1774. He was later chairman of the provisional council appointed by the Continental Congress, and by this office was virtual Governor of North Carolina. It was his hand and pen which framed the State constitution of North Carolina, and his overpowering influence in favor of the jealously guarded States' rights which held back North Carolina's ratification of the Constitution of the United States in 1788.

A description of Willie Jones, his personality and political methods, written by the biographer of James Iredell, a resident of Edenton, and afterward judge of the Supreme Court, gives a vivid picture of this attractive and powerful figure.

Willie Jones of Halifax was the most influential politician in the state. Ultra-democratic in theory, he was

aristocratic in habits, tastes, pursuits and prejudices. He lived sumptuously and wore fine linen. He raced, hunted and played cards; he was proud of his wealth and social position, and fastidious in the selection of friends for his family. A patriot in the Revolution, he was the acknowledged head of a great party. His knowledge of human nature was consummate, and in the arts of insinuation he was unrivaled. He had the power of forecast and combination in an eminent degree.

Though generally relentless and uncompromising as a partisan, he had a generous heart. His time of action was chiefly during the hours of adjournment; then it was that he stimulated the passions, aroused the suspicions, and moderated the ardor of his followers. Then it was that, smoking his pipe, and chatting of crops, ploughs, stocks, and dogs, he stole his way into the hearts of the honest farmers.

This was Willie Jones as his contemporaries knew him; a man of constructive and legal brain and of great personal power and distinction. His adoption of Paul Jones was unreserved and enthusiastic. His "consummate knowledge of human nature," his "powers of forecast" recognized the unusual character of the stranger he had befriended, and with the whole-hearted kindness which characterized him, he rescued him from his misfortunes and opened the way to complete rehabilitation. No more striking proof could possibly be asked of the extraordinary charm of Paul Jones's personality than this experience, for although Willie Jones's tastes were exceedingly aristocratic and exclusive, yet he welcomed him to the intimacy of his home and to the carefully chosen circle of his friends.

Although married in the following year to Mary Montfort, the young daughter of his guardian, Willie Jones was at this time keeping bachelor's hall at "The Grove." Iredell's biographer informs us that having refused to sell his racing stable of fifty blooded horses at the demand of Miss Sukey Cornell, he lost this young lady and her large fortune. He was not only leader of his State in all matters political, but the authority on racing and all field sports. A one-mile race-track ran through the estate, directly past the dining-room, which occupied the back of the house. This room had a high mantel reaching to the ceiling and wide curved windows of English glass commanding a full view of the course. Panelled drawing-rooms with large fireplaces opened on either side of a central hall. A flight of red sandstone steps led up to the pillared entrance, which was shaded by the many trees which gave the name to the place, and which the master in his will directed should be carefully preserved.

The proprietor of this hospitable mansion owned as many as fifteen hundred slaves, who cultivated the gardens and worked the looms and made the salt and planted the tobacco and the various crops which grew upon his fertile acres.

Across the river Allen Jones also kept open house for all visiting friends and strangers, according to the custom of the day. He was already married, and his wife was Rebecca Edwards, sister of the secretary of the celebrated Governor Tryon. The historians of North Carolina tell us that this lady's beauty was so dark and striking that she was known as the Indian queen. She

**"THE GROVE," THE RESIDENCE OF WILLIE JONES.**  
After an old print.





was considered the most accomplished woman of the province, and was remarkable for the elegance of her manners and the "taste and beauty of her domestic arrangements." Her youth had been passed in association with the household of the tyrannical but superb old Governor Tryon, at his palace at New Berne, built from the revenues of the colony, and the most imposing vice-regal residence of the New World. There, in the spacious ballroom, she had danced in the minuets and gavottes which the governor and his lady loved to command and to witness from their exalted thrones. Such was the life and such the customs which formed the manners of the lady of "Mount Gallant."

Her descendants have related that Paul Jones was quite as favored a guest in her home as at "The Grove," and that he was cared for during an attack of typhoid fever at "Mount Gallant." This house is now occupied in its decay by a descendant of Allen Jones's house-keeper, and the room in which its celebrated inmate was nursed back to health is still pointed out to curious visitors.

Both "Mount Gallant" and "The Grove" were centres of colonial hospitality, but Willie Jones possessed a far more powerful individuality than his brother, and it was undoubtedly at his home that Paul Jones met and mingled with the distinguished men of the province. A later North Carolina chronicler writes:

It would be difficult to imagine a more brilliant and attractive home than that of Colonel Willie Jones in historic Halifax. It was like Monticello, the home of his friend Thomas Jefferson, a home which, by the

magnetism of genius and high breeding, drew to its cherishing hearthstone everything of wit, wisdom, and cultured merit that came within reach, and which gave out of all these as freely and richly as it received.

In the pages of the State histories of North Carolina are found the names of the men who were Willie Jones's friends and associates. Harvey, the great moderator, who led the revolting colonists to defy the English governor; Iredell, the distinguished jurist, and Caswell, Hooper, and Hewes, the leading members of the colonial assembly, were frequently entertained at "The Grove," and there discussed the vital questions which were stirring them to the highest pitch of excitement.

Introduced by Willie Jones, the young stranger played his part in all the merrymakings of the province, and met on terms of equality those lovely women whose patriotism and charming qualities were the favorite themes of the State chroniclers. The two daughters of Joseph Montfort, afterward Mrs. Willie Jones and Mrs. Ashe, were particularly prominent among those who sympathized with the Revolution. They were at this time unmarried, and the adornment of Montfort House, which has been described as "a realm of maiden beauty, a home of sparkling wit and innocent mirth," and where, without doubt, Willie Jones and his guests were always welcome. But in spite of the gayeties and distractions of this agreeable colonial society, liberty was the universal theme, and plans for the enfranchisement of the colonies were in every mind and on every tongue.

The people of North Carolina had early enrolled

themselves on the side of independence, and Paul Jones found himself in the centre of a very hot-bed of Revolutionary activity. As early as October, 1774, seven months before the defiant farmers of Mecklenburg had been aroused to the point of signing their declaration of independence, nearly two years before Jefferson penned the immortal declaration, and soon after the more celebrated Boston tea-party, the women of Edenton also had a tea-party, at which they pledged themselves to refrain from drinking the tea which had been taxed by the mother country. Paul Jones responded to these ideas with all the enthusiasm of his nature, and swore allegiance to the cause of his benefactors. The extraordinary contrast of his present situation with the period of darkness and overwhelming misfortune from which he had just emerged reacted upon his mind in a manner natural to a man of such qualities and endowment.

He was yet unconscious of the fact that he possessed the glorious but perilous attributes of genius. In misfortune such as descended upon his soul after the death of the mutineer, and in the long months of penury which followed his abandonment of the hated employment which he had adopted "under duress," he had sunk into a condition of dangerous melancholy. In the association with sympathetic minds such as he encountered while under the protection of his generous benefactor, his highly imaginative intellect found new channels of expression in "free thoughts" and plans for splendid achievement. The most sympathetic trait in the character of this remarkable man is the childlike candor

of his attitude toward all who ever loved or comprehended him. It has been seen how courageously he bore the obloquy which followed the death of Mungo Maxwell and to what an extent he was physically affected by the torment of this experience while yet in his very early youth. Now he was delivered from another period of misfortune, emerging from darkness into light under a new name, to new life and hopes. Still young and full of strength, with his incomparable powers fresh and unimpaired, he realized the opportunities offered him in the New World and adopted the cause of human liberty. Although he had shown skill, application, and ambition in his chosen career during the years of his boyhood and early youth, under the influences which he now encountered his character took its final and definite shape, and a new incentive and impetus was given to the development of his ambition. In the roving sailor's life he had led since his earliest childhood he had never had any associations comparable to those he now enjoyed at "The Grove." Here, indeed, was a society far other than that he had known in his narrow Scottish home, different far from that he found in his brother's little shop in Fredericksburg, heaven itself in comparison to the long months on West Indian trading-ships in turbulent companionship with brutal and mutinous sailors.

Those who would seek the source of the passion for distinction now born in the mind of Paul Jones will readily find it in his determination to surmount the humble and doubtful conditions of his birth, and the lowering influences of his recent occupations with their sinister consequences, by the exercise of his powers in

a new and honorable field. The gratitude which he bore his benefactors, coinciding with his warm sympathy for the cause in which they were engaged, were the reasons which he assigned for becoming an American, and these sentiments sprang from the singular ideality and freshness of feeling which marked his character. This ideality, in striking contrast with his virile intellect and inflexible strength of will, was highly sympathetic with the sentiment of the period.

It is not surprising that he should have desired to express his recognition of the incalculable benefits he had received in this time of his extreme need in some significant and unusual form. That expression, according to the traditions of the descendants of his benefactors, was found in his adoption of their name. The story current in the North Carolina Jones family narrates that when the time came to leave the hospitable doors of "The Grove," Willie Jones offered him a purse, which he refused, asking only for the privilege of adding the name of his benefactors to his own. The reason he is reported to have given was that "he had no name of which he could be proud," and he is again reported to have said that "if he lived he would make them proud of it."<sup>1</sup>

From this time on he used the name of John Paul with the added cognomen of Jones. The letters belonging to the period immediately succeeding his adoption of the name and which pertain to the first years of his service in the American navy are all signed J. P. Jones. His use of only the initials of his original

<sup>1</sup> Statements in Colonel Green's letters to the author. See page 45.

name in this new signature would seem to indicate his willingness at this time to permit his identity to pass unnoticed. In later years he signed his name in full, and finally, after he had made it famous, he dropped the first name, and used simply Paul Jones upon his visiting cards.

The time passed in association with these distinguished people of North Carolina may well be considered the critical period in his history. With the same assimilative genius which gathered an education unusual in those times from the very air about him, Paul Jones quickly adopted the manners of the gentle people he was so fortunate to meet at this period of his career. They formed his standards of true gentility and fitted him to shine in the salons of Versailles. From this time on we begin to see the Paul Jones of history—the courteous and chivalric gentleman, the heroic champion of human liberty. No longer living for himself except as he might win glory in battle, he was ready to give up every youthful dream and life itself in the service of America. The son of the Scotch gardener, the captain of West India trading-ships and slavers, in a few weeks experienced this truly remarkable metamorphosis.

The fashioning of this weapon to be used in the establishment of the principle of human liberty, then the universal preoccupation of the world, is a striking example of the resistless progress of civilization, the inevitable working out of the mysterious plan of human development. The active agent in this extraordinary development of the potentiality of Paul Jones was again

the *deus ex machina* in the train of events which brought those potentialities into activity, for it was Willie Jones who introduced him to Joseph Hewes, who was one of the three members of the Continental Congress from North Carolina, and of great influence in the councils of the new nation.

Joseph Hewes was a partner in the ship-building trade of the Robert Smith whose brother James, Paul Jones had hoped to find when he first took refuge in the colonies of North America; but in the absence of James Smith, Jones was in no position to introduce himself to his influential brother or his partner, and later became known to them both under the auspices of his opulent and beneficent host and patron. During the autumn of 1774 Hewes was absent in Philadelphia attending the first session of the Continental Congress held in that city, but he returned to his home in Edenton in the beginning of the winter, and during the agitated months which preceded the open outbreak of hostilities between England and her colonies he was in constant attendance at the meetings of the North Carolina assembly and in daily association with the leading politicians of the State. Already deeply interested in maritime affairs, as the builder and owner of ships, he was destined to be an exceedingly important factor in the organization of the navy of the United States. The friendship and warm admiration which he immediately conceived for Paul Jones was of invaluable service to the man who was now filled with a burning desire to be of service to his adopted country. The relation between the two men immediately became exceedingly close and even



affectionate. Paul Jones informed Hewes without delay of the unfortunate incidents in his history, and was rewarded for his frankness and confidence by a protection no less warm than it was effectual.

While without the aristocratic background or political skill of Willie Jones, Hewes had a constructive and powerful mind and the most faithful heart that ever beat for friend or country. Born of a sturdy family of Connecticut Quakers who were driven by Indian massacres into New Jersey, he was educated at the schools of Princeton and early apprenticed to a counting-house in Philadelphia. Released from his indentures, he embarked in business as a ship-owner, and, having soon acquired a comfortable fortune, removed at the age of thirty to the little town of Edenton, doubtless on account of its advantages as a port for the West Indian trade.

Edenton, although a small community, was at that time the capital town of the province and the residence of the royal governor, Samuel Johnson. The recollections of its early residents describe it as a blest abode, favored by nature and the delightful character of its society. A fertile clearing by the blue bay-side, surrounded by forests, bird-inhabited, rich with hanging grape-vines and fragrant with every Southern bloom, this virgin region was given its name from the colonial governor, Eden, and during the pre-Revolutionary period was considered the court end of the province. There was no better society in all the colonies than that which existed in and about this little town. High ability, noble birth, a simple yet elegant mode of life;

warm affections, earnest ambitions; all these were found among the distinguished people who met in easy Southern friendliness and the enthusiasm of rising patriotism around the hearth fires and on the wide piazzas of happy Edenton.

Samuel Johnson, its first citizen, and governor of the province, descended from a noble family in Scotland, was a power not only in the colonial but also in the Revolutionary period, and was associated with all the great men of the country. He brought with him all the English fashions and entertained many people of title and importance at his home. This beautiful house, which set the fashion of architecture for the colony, was named "Hays," from the home of Sir Walter Raleigh, in England, and still stands on an eminence in the midst of its formal gardens overlooking the bay of Edenton, a crescent of water rivalling in beauty the bay of Naples. In the vicinity lived Sir Nathaniel Dukenfield, the great James Iredell, called by Washington to the Supreme Court of the United States before he was forty, and other men of importance. Into this charmed circle Joseph Hewes was soon admitted. He was said to have a most "unusual amenity of manner," and became immediately, in spite of his Quaker birth and bringing-up, a loved and popular member of Edenton society. When Iredell arrived from his home in England to take up his residence in Edenton, he sent back to his relatives his impression of Hewes: "I must say there is a gentleman in this town who is a particular favorite of mine. His name is Hewes. He is a merchant here, and our member for this town, the patron

and the greatest honor to it. About six or seven years ago he was within a few days of being married to one of Mr. Johnson's sisters, who died rather suddenly, and this unhappy circumstance for the time embittered every satisfaction in life to him. He has continued since unmarried, which I believe he will do. His connection with Mr. Johnson's family is just as if he had really been his brother-in-law, a circumstance which mutually does honor to them both." This little account tells a story of faithful attachment and of qualities of character both firm and lovable.

Joseph Hewes was never an articulate force in the councils of the new nation, but no one of the great men who established American independence did more essential work in organization. At every step in the history of North Carolina his name appears. He was member of the general assemblies of the colony from 1766 to 1770, one of the committee which called the Independent Congress of North Carolina at New Berne, a member of the secret committee of correspondence, and delegate to the first Philadelphia Congress. He was not only a signer of the Declaration of Independence, but it was he who cast the deciding vote of North Carolina which determined the adoption of that immortal document. "You know," wrote John Adams to Jefferson, "that the unanimity of the states finally depended on the vote of Joseph Hewes." Elsewhere he wrote: "One day while a member was producing arguments to show that the general opinion of all the colonies was for independence, and among them North Carolina, Hewes, who has hitherto constantly voted

against it, stood suddenly upright and lifting both hands to Heaven cried out, 'It is done and I will abide by it.' I would give more for a perfect painting of the terror and horror upon the face of the old majority at that critical moment, than for the best piece of Raphael."

In the already quoted life and correspondence of James Iredell there are frequent references to "Mr. Hewes playing backgammon at Hornblower's Tavern," "Mr. Hewes making the responses at the Episcopal Church at Edenton," and on one occasion arguing on religious questions in a manner quite surprising to his interlocutors. His was a nature anchored by heredity to the strictest rules of conduct and responsibility, but by his unusual mental endowment eager to welcome every sign of freedom in religious thought, every hope of liberty for his country, every ardent quality in a friend.

Paul Jones was exactly the man to have attracted this emancipated Quaker, and there was another very cogent reason for their intimacy in the fact that Hewes was an owner of vessels in the West Indian trade and found Jones's long experience in this service a basis for sympathetic companionship.

It is no difficult task for the imagination to picture Hewes, as Iredell often described him, strolling down through the wide, tree-shaded main street of Edenton from his house to his wharf in company with Paul Jones, while they discussed matters connected with the West Indian trade or the far more enthralling questions of that remarkable time. Hewes seems to have recognized Jones's capacity from the very first moment of

their acquaintance, and realized what services he might render to the cause of the colonists in the conflict which was now so imminent.

Paul Jones was probably quite different at this time from the rough Captain who descended in the "Pirate" ship upon the island of Martha's Vineyard. The open-air exercise of the hunting and riding community of North Carolina had probably given him that slight and graceful figure of which all his later biographers have written. The well-known bust by Houdon, made a few years later, was pronounced by both Madison and Jefferson to be wonderfully faithful. It is an excellent example of that great sculptor's minute observation and expression of character. It shows the face of the true fighter, and bears the characteristic marks of the sailor, showing both candor and courage. The brow is fine in shape, compact and symmetrical, differing much from the high dome of the all-knowing Franklin. The lips in the bust are very beautiful, symmetrically revealing the innately aristocratic personality, finely cut and very firm. The eyes in the marble do not reveal the blaze which reflected the inner fires. The portrait by Peale reproduces this trait, mingled with a strange look of wildness, a fawn-like glance of inquiry, youthful and naïve. It is recorded that his lips could assume the curve of ironical superiority, but that their smile was infinitely engaging. Various witnesses speak of his grace and ease of gesture. His face was stern and grave, indelibly marked by the suffering of his early years, and tanned by tropic suns. He could have differed little at this time from the Paul Jones whom John Adams met in

Europe four years later, and whom, as an officer appointed from the South, the stanch New England partisan regarded with suspicion. "This is the most intriguing officer in the American navy," wrote Adams. "Eccentricities and irregularities are expected of him, they are in his character, they are visible in his eyes. His voice is soft and still and small. His eye has keenness and wildness and softness in it." Although he did not fail to recognize and acknowledge his later importance, Adams never understood the character of Paul Jones; but the picture thus presented, with a few strokes of a remarkably observant and vivid pen, furnishes a unique impression of Jones's expression and manner, the ringing "*vox ferrea*" of the commander tuned to a low gentleness, the keenness and wildness of the eyes of genius, uncontrollable and not to be disguised. This was the striking personality which now emerged from nameless obscurity to play an extraordinary rôle in the fortunes of America.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Herman Melville, in "Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile," published in New York in 1855, contributes an imaginative picture of Jones, which follows the prevailing traditions of his character and appearance. "He was a rather small, elastic, swarthy man, with an aspect as of a disinterested Indian Chief. An unvanquishable enthusiasm, intensified to perfect sobriety, couched in his savage self-possessed eye. A wonderful atmosphere of proud friendliness and scornful isolation invested him. A cool solemnity of intrepidity set on his lip. He looked like one who on purpose sought out harm's way. He looked like one who never had been and never would be a subordinate."

## CHAPTER IV

### BEGINNINGS OF THE AMERICAN NAVY

ACCORDING to the statements of all of Paul Jones's early biographers, he went, "about the year 1773, to Fredericksburg, to administer upon the estate of his brother William, who had died intestate, and without children." In a note in the "Life" of her uncle which she caused to be compiled by Robert Sands, Miss Taylor states that "He had recovered, as I know from the best sources, several thousand pounds from the wreck of his brother's fortune in Virginia."

These authoritative statements by his family have lately been proved to be entirely incorrect. William Paul did not die intestate, for his will, duly recorded, has been found in the court-house of Spottsylvania County, Virginia, where Fredericksburg is situated. His death did not occur in 1773, as all these biographers agree in stating, but in the following year, as is proved by the inscription on his tombstone, which still exists in a church-yard in Fredericksburg, bearing his name and the year of his death, 1774. As already set forth in a preceding chapter, it is clear that Paul Jones did not seek his brother in Fredericksburg when he first took refuge in the Southern colonies, for fear of being recognized, and this assumption is greatly strengthened by the obvious fact that this brother, whose house was his home in earlier days, had rendered him no assistance

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during the whole period of "twenty months" in which he was left to pine in penury and seclusion. This period is easily defined as that which intervened between June, 1773, when he was compelled to fly from Tobago, and January, 1775, when he was so fortunate as to meet Willie Jones.

In the spring of 1775, when his apprehensions of troublesome consequences from the occurrence in Tobago had been allayed by the closing of the ports between the rebellious colonies and the West Indian possessions of Great Britain, as well as by the protection afforded him through the open and authorized adoption of the name of his benefactors, he determined to seek his brother, and journeyed to Fredericksburg for that purpose. He found that William Paul was dead, and, as the two executors appointed under his will had refused to act, that one John Atkinson had been appointed administrator, having given bond in the sum of five hundred pounds. The present clerk of Spottsylvania County, at the request of a late investigator,<sup>1</sup> has stated that no record exists in his office of the distribution of the estate. Miss Taylor's statement that her uncle had recovered a certain amount from the "wreck" of William Paul's estate might indicate that the administrator appointed by the court made an unwise or improper disposition of the property, and that comparatively little was left for Paul Jones to recover.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Reverend Cyrus Townsend Brady.

<sup>2</sup> A tablet erected in the year 1910 by the Betty Washington Lewis Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution, upon the house in which William Paul resided in Fredericksburg, bears the following inscription:



In this connection it is singular to note that in the letter to Franklin, which otherwise partakes largely of the nature of a confession<sup>1</sup> and apology for the obscure acts of his life, he should have mentioned the sending to his family of remittances arising possibly from the proceeds of this estate, more especially as further reference in the same letter would seem to indicate that he had done everything possible for them. He states that during the time when he still felt that he should conceal his whereabouts from his family in Scotland he had endeavored to watch over the happiness of his poor relations, *unseen*. "For that purpose," he wrote, "I sent

"THIS TABLET MARKS THE ONLY HOME IN AMERICA OF JOHN PAUL JONES. HE WAS APPOINTED A LIEUTENANT IN THE CONTINENTAL NAVY WHILE STILL A RESIDENT OF VIRGINIA."

A communication from Fredericksburg to the *New York Sun* of April 11, 1911, contains a letter from Francis Brooke, brother of Doctor Lawrence, who was the surgeon on the *Bon Homme Richard*:

ST. JULIEN. *June 26, 1838.*

MY DEAR SIR.

I have received your letter from Richmond. All I remember of John Paul Jones I heard from my brother Dr. Brooke, who was the surgeon of the *Bon Homme Richard* the whole of her celebrated cruise. I think I remember to have seen him when very young in 1773. I was at school in Fredericksburg and William Paul was a Scotch tailor who made my clothes. On his death John came to Fredericksburg to administer on his property. I then saw him in the shop when I went for my clothes. On seeing his picture years after I remembered this. It is a mistake that his brother was a merchant. I do not think he remained long in Fredericksburg. The next year, I think, he was employed in the navy.

Yours very sincerely.

FRANCIS T. BROOKE.

Gen William Lambert. Richmond.

Mr. Brooke's recollection of dates is inaccurate. Paul Jones could not have come to Fredericksburg in 1773 to administer upon his brother's estate, because William Paul did not die until the following year. Mr. Brooke probably followed the statements contained in the early biographies of Jones as to the date of his visit to Fredericksburg.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Franklin, March 6, 1779. Appendix B.

**THE TOMBSTONE OF WILLIAM PAUL.**

**BUILDING IN FREDERICKSBURG WHERE WILLIAM  
PAUL'S SHOP WAS LOCATED.**



them various little remittances (bills) from America, in trust to a very worthy friend, Captain Plaince, of Cork, to be applied to their use without their having the pain of knowing from whence; but to my great sorrow I found that they had all miscarried, the letters that contained them having been sunk and the rest taken on the passage." During the period of the war all communication was so slow and precarious that it is not surprising that he was entirely uncertain of being able to communicate with his family at all, and that he himself remained for several years ignorant of their condition or whereabouts.

It is interesting to observe that for some time after he dared to appear openly under his new name in America he feared to furnish information of his whereabouts to any but his trusted agent in Great Britain; receiving no reply from Captain Plaince and no notice that the drafts upon his account had been presented, he waited until the spring of the year 1777 before he again attempted, through another agent, to send money to his family. Even at that time he was still ignorant as to whether his mother was alive, but directed the whole amount of his recovered property at Tobago to be applied to her support and that of her grandchildren, an amount at least equal to any sums that may have been due them from his brother's estate.

Doctor Read, who was in Jones's confidence during the whole period of his residence in the South, and with whom he was in close communication during the period when he was occupied in settling his brother's estate, has supplied an important indication as to his atti-

tude in regard to the obscure question of his disposition of this property. As Doctor Read's letters are the sole source of information in regard to this time, and as he was an entirely respectable and credible witness, his statements should be regarded with confidence. Writing in the year 1778, and recalling the time when they were both out of pocket, he complains that he is still "in sour misfortune's books," but congratulates Jones upon the improvement of his financial condition, saying: "You once more, and I want words to congratulate you on the subject, taste the pleasure of affluence, and taste it with the feelings that do not accompany the generality of mankind, a nice sentiment of honor and the sure tho' slow reward of merit."

Various speculations in ship supplies and real estate, for which Jones had evinced marked aptitude, were the sources of this improved condition, references to which we find in letters to Robert Smith which pertain to this period. He had made no use of the proceeds of the property which he had recovered from his investments in Tobago, for, as we have seen, he sent the whole amount of this to his family. A few months after the writing of the letter in which he directed the forwarding of these sums, at the moment of his departure from America on the *Ranger*, in the autumn of 1777, he made a will in which he bequeathed to his mother and sisters the proceeds of his later investments, representing the whole amount of his fortune.

Doctor Read again furnishes very interesting information as to their occupations during Jones's visit to him in Virginia, which immediately followed his depart-

ure from North Carolina. Read lived in Goochland County, which lies just south of the county of Spottsylvania, where Fredericksburg is situated, with only Hanover County lying between. Thus we have a picture of Paul Jones riding through the valleys of Virginia during the spring of 1775, having presumably finished his business in Fredericksburg, and turning southward to join the friend who was eagerly awaiting him. With a mind quickened by new enthusiasms, and a personality which always attracted affection whenever he cared to inspire it, the young Paul Jones was now associated for the first time in his life with women of birth and charm. The world was "at the spring" for him, and in the South, where he had found friends and new ambitions, he planned and talked of spending the remainder of his days.

It was at this time that he fixed upon "his chosen scheme of life in the country of his fond election," and had visions of that "domestic happiness," which he relinquished, as he often protested, "to restore peace to mankind." His later frequent and definite references to his "prospect of domestic happiness"<sup>1</sup> indicate that he had fallen seriously in love at this time and that his affections were returned. The truth of this assumption is proved by a statement, made in the biography published in Edinburgh in the year 1830, based on information and documents furnished by his family, that about the time "when he entered the Navy, Paul Jones formed an ardent attachment for an American lady. Their affection was mutual, but circumstances forbade

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Lady Selkirk, May 9, 1778.

their union, and from this time he formed the resolution of never marrying." In a letter from Doctor Read, who, as has been seen, was Jones's confidant and constant companion during his sojourn in Virginia, the identity of his sweetheart is revealed in Read's significant conclusion that Jones would never carry out his intention of settling in Virginia in view of the lady's marriage to another. It is somewhat surprising to learn that she was probably the brilliant young beauty, Dorothea Spottswood Dandridge, granddaughter of the great Governor Spottswood and own cousin of Martha Washington, who afterward became the bride of Patrick Henry. "You tell me," Read wrote, "you are under some expectation of purchasing a Virginia estate, but some more agreeable idea will I fear call you off and deprive us of you, Miss Dandridge is no more, that is, she a few months ago gave herself into the arms of Patrick Henry."

This young lady lived in her father's house in Hanover County, near "Mount Brilliant," the home of Patrick Henry's father, and also adjoining "Scotch-town," a large mansion, afterward the childhood home of Dolly Madison, where Henry was at that time living with his first wife, whom he had married at the early age of eighteen. In the year 1778, when this letter of Doctor Read was written, Paul Jones had been for three years away from Virginia, completely absorbed in the thrilling adventures of his career in the Revolutionary War. At the time when he knew Miss Dandridge, in 1775, she was a girl of nineteen, and the man who was to be her husband was already married, twice her age, and possessing not only a wife but a family of six chil-

dren. Whatever the circumstances may have been which forbade her union with Paul Jones, it is clearly evident from the reasons later assigned by him that the overpowering motive which drew him away from Virginia was the desire for distinction, to which the interests of his heart were ever subordinated. He was not in a position to marry at this time, fame and fortune were still to win, and it is highly probable that the aristocratic family of his sweetheart looked coldly upon their young daughter's love for the attractive stranger of obscure origin who had appeared in their midst. Thus the prospective hero, listening to war's alarms, relinquished the "softer affections of his heart" and dedicated himself to the cause of his adopted country. He became an enthusiastic participant in the colloquies of excited Virginians who met at Fredericksburg, bringing the news of the risings and demonstrations which spread throughout the surrounding counties. Double relays of couriers brought the news from the other rebellious colonies, and the militia were assembling at town-halls and churches from one end of the country to the other. Hand-bills and memorials were posted at every convenient spot, and in March of this year Patrick Henry made his daring and immortal speech demanding "liberty or death."

Jones met both Henry and Jefferson at this time, through Read's introduction, and their mutual acquaintance with the Dandridges, at whose house in Hanover County both Henry and Jefferson were constant visitors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letters from Read to Jones belonging to this period contain messages to Jefferson.



In May a new session of Congress was assembled in Philadelphia, and Paul Jones made haste to follow his friend Hewes to the seat of government. He was now at the very door of Congress, awaiting with impatience the formation of the navy, which by the middle of the summer was being considered by the members of that body. It was small wonder that he forgot his dream of happiness and that the memory of his Virginia sweetheart faded from his mind; for the Revolution was now fairly under way, and the idea of independence was openly discussed and contemplated.

Five months had passed since Lexington, but three since Bunker Hill; Falmouth had already been ruthlessly destroyed by British ships, and indignation was at white-heat. Washington had but lately assumed command of the army, and the time was at hand for the formation of a fleet. Paul Jones, enjoying an intimate and daily association with his powerful friend Joseph Hewes, had not long to wait for the opportunity for distinction which he so ardently desired. The first naval committee was appointed as the result of the desire of Congress to intercept the transports laden with military stores for the British army. Considerable discussion had already taken place in regard to the advisability of providing a force for this purpose at government expense.

On the receipt of the news that two transports, entirely unarmed and richly laden with military supplies, were en route from Quebec, Congress on October 5 proceeded to a serious consideration of the question, and after long and heated discussion a small committee, consisting of Silas Deane, of Connecticut, John Lang-

don, of New Hampshire, and Christopher Gadsden, of South Carolina, was appointed to look into the matter without delay. The necessity of haste being obvious, the committee reported on the same day, with the result that Washington was requested to borrow two of the cruisers belonging to the State of Massachusetts. Two days before the appointment of this committee the delegates from Rhode Island, in accordance with instructions issued in August by the assembly of that Colony, recommended a much broader action: the formation of a fleet for national defence. On the 7th of October the resolution was discussed, and, although it was decided to postpone definite action until the 16th, the question of purchasing ships at government expense was now fairly before the members. The debate was conducted by the venerable Stephen Hopkins, long governor of Rhode Island, Silas Deane, afterward American commissioner to France, John Rutledge, Gadsden, the Reverend Doctor Zibly, of Georgia, and John Adams, of Massachusetts. The whole day was given up to the discussion, and it is evident, from the length of time which it consumed, that it deserved the description of the usual Congressional debates as written by Adams in a letter to his wife:

There is in Congress a collection of the greatest men upon this continent, in point of abilities, virtue and fortune. Every man in it is a great man, an orator, a critic and a statesman and therefore every man upon every question must show his oratory, his criticism and his political abilities.

The Rhode Island proposition met with the strongest opposition, some of the members declaring it "the maddest idea in the world" and insisting that the building of a navy would "mortgage the whole continent." But Adams, plying as usual the laboring oar, sustained the action for hours against "time and tide," with the result that the decision of merely borrowing ships from Massachusetts was altered to a resolution of instructions to the committee to look into the matter of the purchase of war-ships for the government. Following the committee's report, Congress, on the 13th, passed a resolution to order the immediate purchase of two swift sailing-vessels, one of ten and the other of fourteen guns, to cruise to the eastward for the purpose of intercepting the English forces in Boston. With the passing of this resolution the American navy was founded. The *Lexington* and *Reprisal* were immediately purchased and the process of their equipment begun. On the 30th of October the original committee of three was increased to seven, including John Adams, Stephen Hopkins, Joseph Hewes, and Richard Henry Lee, and, two large ships of thirty-six and twenty guns having been ordered, the *Alfred* and the *Columbus* were added to the infant fleet. On the 13th of December Congress ordered thirteen ships of war, and followed this action by increasing the naval committee again, so as to contain a member for each colony. A few days more of this active deliberation culminated in the formal appointment of a commander-in-chief of the new navy, four captains, and a list of first, second, and third lieutenants.

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Before this formal action on the part of Congress as a body, Washington, by virtue of his authority as commander-in-chief of the army, had issued several commissions to small ships, giving their commanders instructions to cruise about Massachusetts Bay in order to intercept British transports. Captain John Manly, commanding the *Lee*, was the first to sail under an order of this kind from Washington, and during a period of six weeks, beginning with the end of November, 1775, he succeeded in capturing four of these provision ships and in getting his prizes safely into port.

The colonial assembly of Massachusetts in November of this year considered itself empowered to pass a law granting commissions to armed vessels, with orders for the seizure of British ships.

A great deal of discussion has taken place in regard to the rival claims of Barry and Manly to the title of "Father of the American Navy." If such a title belongs to a commander by the original choice and authority of Washington, that honor falls to Captain Manly, of the *Lee*. His appointment was confirmed by Congress, and had an authentic but what might be termed a semi-official character. John Barry, returning from British waters with the *Black Prince* on October 13, the very day on which Congress passed its first resolution for the founding of the American navy, was put in command of the *Lexington*, the first ship bought and equipped under this law. This vessel was not only the first ship which was purchased by full Congressional authority, but it was actually the first which sailed under government orders. Barry's appointment, on

December 7, was prior to the resolution by which a commander-in-chief and other officers of the navy were ordered by Congress, but it was a *bona fide* Congressional appointment none the less, and this fact would seem undoubtedly to give to him the honor of being the first commander in the United States navy.<sup>1</sup> The list of commissions, including commander-in-chief, captains, and lieutenants of the American fleet, which was issued by Congress on December the 22d includes none for Captain Barry, who was already at sea under his appointment by the earlier resolution of October 13. It was not until eighteen months later, on September 26, 1776, that Hancock gave Barry his regular commission in written form, as captain of his ship, the *Lexington*, but he actually sailed, in obedience to the orders of October the 13th, in the early part of February, 1776, two weeks before the fleet under Hopkins left the Delaware.

The management of the infant navy was chaotic in the extreme, one committee following another in quick succession. No regular rank was established at this early period. Congress itself had an uncertain title to government authority until after the Declaration of

<sup>1</sup> A characteristic comment of John Adams shows that he denied that the fleet under Hopkins was the first regularly appointed American maritime force. The pretensions of both Jones and Barry were based on this assumption.

"Vanity is one of the diseases of the mind. You and all the world know to what a scandalous degree I have been infected with it all the days of my life. Jones and Barry were leprous with it when the first said 'My hand first hoisted the American flag,' and the last was not less distempered with it when he said 'the British Naval Flag first struck to me.' Both were true only in the mouth of John Manly, whose prizes were of more importance to this country than all that Jones and Barry both performed."—(Adams to Dr. Rush, 1800.)

Independence; and the confusion in rank and priority incident upon its rapidly succeeding and changing resolutions gave rise to endless troubles and heart-burnings among the newly appointed officers. The lion's share of the appointments in the first list of officers fell to New England. Stephen Hopkins, representing Rhode Island, which had initiated the movement for the construction of the fleet, was a man of eminent abilities, and the most influential and respected man in the State. He was a warm friend of John Adams, who so earnestly advocated the adoption of the navy resolution. It is Adams again who has left the most illuminating and graphic account of the sessions of the naval committee, which took place in a room reserved in a public-house in Philadelphia, lasting after six in the evening until the close of its business.

The pleasantest part of the labors of the four years I spent in Congress from 1774 to 1778, was in the Committee on Naval affairs. Mr. Lee and Mr. Gadsden were sensible men and very cheerful, but Governor Hopkins of Rhode Island, above seventy years of age, kept us all alive. Upon business his experience and judgment was very useful; but when the business of the evening was over he kept us in conversation until eleven and sometimes twelve o'clock. His custom was to drink nothing all day until eight o'clock in the evening; then his beverage was Jamaica spirits and water. He had read Greek, Roman and British history, and was familiar with English poetry, particularly Pope, Thompson, and Milton, and the flow of his soul made all of his readings our own, and seemed to bring in recollection to all of us, all we had ever read. Hopkins never drank to excess; but all he drank was immediately not

only converted into wit and knowledge, but inspired us all with similar qualities.<sup>1</sup>

The picture of our great forefathers in their hours of ease relaxing into a high enthusiasm inspired by Milton, Thompson, and Jamaica rum may cause a smile; but a glance at the list of officers of the new navy proves that favors and places were procured in much the same manner as obtains to-day:

Ezek Hopkins, commander-in-chief.

Dudley Saltonstall, captain of the flag-ship *Alfred*.

Abraham Whipple, captain of the *Columbus*.

Nicholas Biddle, captain of the *Andrea Doria*.

John B. Hopkins, captain of the *Cabot*.

First Lieutenants: John Paul Jones, Rhodes Arnold, Stansbury, Hoysted Hacker, and Jonathan Pitcher.

Second Lieutenants: Benjamin Seabury, Joseph Olney, Elisha Warner, Thos. Weaver, and McDougal.

It will be seen that Stephen Hopkins's influence obtained for his brother Ezek the position of commander-in-chief, as well as the captaincy of the *Columbus* for his relation, Abraham Whipple, and that of the *Cabot* for Ezek Hopkins's son. Dudley Saltonstall, a relation of Adams, was appointed captain of the flag-ship *Alfred*, while the command of the remaining ship was given to the brave and ill-fated Nicholas Biddle, the chosen representative of the wealth and social influence of Philadelphia.

Although Joseph Hewes was not a member of the first naval committee appointed by Congress on the

<sup>1</sup>Diary of John Adams.

5th of October, his name was added later, upon the enlargement of that committee on the 30th, by reason of his well-known business ability and his experience as a ship-owner, and he was soon invested with the entire charge of the equipment of the fleet ordered by Congress. He performed the enormous labors thus imposed upon him with tireless zeal, working with no stop for food or drink from early morning until late at night. He sometimes found it necessary to advance money out of his private fortune for the needy government, and always labored with unsparing forgetfulness of health and private interest for the cause of his country.

In spite of the fact that he alone was intrusted with the practical work of organizing the fleet, he could command but one appointment, and this he promptly gave to Paul Jones, who was afterward known during the whole of the Revolution as "the North Carolina Captain." Time was to prove the wisdom of Hewes's choice of a naval officer and to ventilate the unfitness of family appointments. The fact that Jones owed his appointment in the navy to Hewes is proved by various statements in Jones's later letters. In a letter of May the 22d, 1777, at the time when he had just been given the command of the *Ranger*, he clearly acknowledges his obligations to his friend: "The great individual obligation I owe, makes it more than ever my duty to keep you informed of my movements. I need not assure you that this is a welcome duty, for the reason that I know there is no person living to whom news of my success can bring more satisfaction than to yourself, and you are surely entitled to such a satisfaction because



you more than any other person have labored to place the instruments of success in my hands."

A few months later, on November 7, 1777, he wrote: "Of one thing in spite of all you may definitely assure yourself, and that is that I will not accept of any command or enter into any arrangement that can bring in question or put out of sight the regular rank I hold in the United States Navy, for which I now as always acknowledge my debt to you more than to any other person."

The attitude which Paul Jones maintained toward this singularly sincere and benignant man reveals the most delightful side of his nature. With a gratitude only equalled by his trust and affection he reported to him, as to the author of his destiny, the fullest and most minute account of his actions, and the frankest expression of his thoughts, from the outset of his service in the American navy. His feeling of obligation is sometimes fairly overflowing, as when he says: "I unbosom myself to you with the utmost confidence; for you have laid me under the most singular obligations, and you are indeed the angel of my happiness, since to your friendship I owe my present enjoyment as well as my future prospects." Or again, when he earnestly represents the necessity of certain improvements in the new and ill-regulated service in which Hewes had placed him, and gives eloquent expression to his high sense of the importance of his patron's position and personal character, and the warmth of their mutual devotion to the cause of liberty and America: "When I address my sentiments to you with this freedom, I consider you not

as a Member of the grand State Council of a rising Empire, but as a private Gentleman of disinterested candour and penetration, a Free citizen of the world, governed by the Noblest of principles, the good of mankind, and since Liberty hath chosen America as her last asylum, every effort to protect and cherish her is noble, and will be rewarded with the thanks of future ages."<sup>1</sup>

Jones received his appointment on December the 7th, and was assigned the place of first lieutenant on the list adopted by Congress on December the 22d. As appears by a letter to his friend Hewes, written after the first cruise of the fleet, he had been offered the command of the sloop *Providence*, and afterward of the tiny ship *Fly*, but refused them both. He showed a most commendable modesty at this time in regard to his abilities, preferring a post as lieutenant on the *Alfred*, not only on account of the greater opportunities for action which he believed he would be likely to encounter on board the flag-ship, but also, as he professed, because he had hopes of gaining much useful knowledge from men of more experience than himself. He states elsewhere, with becoming frankness, that he found himself "imperfect in the duties of a Lieutenant." Very few weeks were to pass, however, before Jones himself realized that he had nothing to learn from his fellow-officers, and that he was head and shoulders above them in seamanship and in every quality which should characterize a commander.

On December 23, the day following the issue of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Hewes, October 31, 1776.

list of navy appointments, Stephen Hopkins wrote an affectionate letter to his brother Ezek, who was at that time brigadier-general, commanding the American soldiers at Newport, and informed him of the action of Congress. The new commander-in-chief thereupon repaired to Philadelphia and found his flag-ship entirely ready to sail. In the absence of Captain Saltonstall, who was still in Boston, the *Alfred* had been armed and manned by Jones. Commander-in-Chief Hopkins promised to make Jones captain in recognition of these services, but a day or two before the squadron sailed from Philadelphia Saltonstall appeared and took command.

On a day in January, unnoted in any record, except as to the character of the weather, which was said to have been clear and cold, the commander-in-chief went for the first time on board the *Alfred*, moored in the Delaware. Shortly before nine o'clock a barge put off from the *Alfred* and was rowed to the ship at the foot of Walnut Street, when, without any delay, Hopkins stepped on board, and the barge returned, bringing him through the floating ice to the flag-ship. Eight ships of the new fleet lay at anchor side by side. All Philadelphia was awake and aware of the importance of the occasion, and at an early hour of the gray winter day the patriotic inhabitants were assembled in crowds upon the shore and wharves, while the shipping in the river was gayly decorated in honor of the occasion. As Hopkins gained the deck, Captain Saltonstall gave a signal, and John Paul Jones hoisted with his own hand the first flag which ever floated over an American ship

COMMODORE EZEK HOPKINS.  
From a print in the collection of Mr. Charles A. Munn.



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of war. With this act the American navy began its existence, and Paul Jones's association with it remained a pride to his glory-loving heart until the latest day of his life. This flag was not the stars and stripes, but was a curious banner made of yellow silk, bearing a lively representation of a rattlesnake and the motto "Don't tread on me."<sup>1</sup> A flag of this description was presented by Gadsden to Congress on February 8, a few weeks after the banner of the colonies was unfurled

<sup>1</sup> 1. "On the 3d instant the Continental flag on board the *Black Prince* (*Alfred*) opposite Philadelphia was hoisted."—"Am. Archives," ser. IV, vol. IV, pp. 358-360. Letter to the Earl of Dartmouth from "a minister of the King of Kings," "B. P.," dated December 20, 1775.)

2. January 2, 1776, the "Union Flag" was hoisted on Prospect Hill, Cambridge.—("Am. Archives," ser. IV, vol. IV, p. 570.)

3. January 14, 1776, Hopkins arrived at Philadelphia and took command of the fleet. "As Hopkins gained the deck (*Alfred*) Captain Dudley Saltonstall gave the signal and First Lieutenant John Paul Jones hoisted a yellow silk flag bearing a lively representation of a rattlesnake and the motto 'Don't tread on me.'"—(Preble, "Origin, etc., Flag U.S."; Field, "Life of Esek Hopkins.")

4. February 8, 1776, Christopher Gadsden, member of the marine committee, presented to Congress a flag like the one described in No. 3, "an elegant standard such as is to be used by the commander-in-chief in the American Navy."—(Preble, "Origin Flag, etc."; Field, "Life of Esek Hopkins.")

5. February 9, 1776, the "First American fleet that ever swelled their sails on the Western Ocean . . . sailed from Philadelphia (as far as Capes of the Delaware) under the display of a Union Flag with 13 stripes in the field, emblematic of the 13 colonies."—"Am. Archives," ser. IV, vol. IV, p. 964.)

6. February 17, 1776, the fleet got out to sea.

Inference may be drawn from these statements that the "yellow silk flag," said to have been first hoisted, was the special "standard" of Hopkins as commander-in-chief of the navy. And the fleet sailed on its expedition under the national ensign then used, the Union flag.

This was the flag which an English writer of the period refers to in the following words: "A strange flag lately appeared in our seas bearing a pine tree with the portraiture of a rattle snake coiled up at its root, with the daring words 'Don't tread on me.' We learned that the vessels bearing this flag have a sort of commission from a society of people in Philadelphia, calling themselves the 'Continental Congress'!"

at the mast-head of the flag-ship, in memory of this occasion. It hung for some time over the President's chair.

Commander-in-Chief Hopkins began his brief and inglorious career by losing so much time in delays that his fleet was caught by the ice in the Delaware and prevented from sailing until February the 17th. Although directed by Congress to proceed southward to attack the fleet of Lord Dunmore, which had been destroying towns and estates in Virginia, Hopkins, who was also authorized by the last article in his orders to use his own judgment in regard to the direction of his cruises, prudently availed himself of this privilege, and instead of attacking the powerful fleet of Dunmore, steered his course toward the Bahamas. The squadron anchored at Abaco, with two captured sloops from New Providence in tow, from whom Hopkins learned that the forts of the island were very insufficiently guarded, and that they also contained a large store of munitions of war. Hopkins thereupon determined to make an attack for the purpose of securing these stores. This was in itself an object of the greatest importance, for the colonial government was wellnigh destitute of powder; but the inexperience of the commander rendered the expedition only partially successful. Instead of approaching the island by stealth and under cover of night, the whole squadron sailed boldly up in broad day and within full sight of the forts, giving ample time and warning to the British governor, who, immediately recognizing the object of the attack, got the larger portion of the powder on board a couple

of ships and sent them out of danger during the night.

It is most interesting to note the initiative, superior intelligence, and courage shown by Paul Jones in this the earliest moment of his service in the American navy. Instantly recognizing the grave mistake made by the commander-in-chief, he was ready with a plan to retrieve it. Hopkins proposed to land the marines on the western coast of the island and from thence march directly upon the town. Jones, who was fortunately consulted, pointed out that no road led from this part of the island, and that the necessarily slow progress of the marines would be communicated to the inhabitants, who would thus have time to collect and organize a defence. He also pointed out that no harbor existed on this shore in which the ships of the squadron could be anchored. Knowing every island in the West Indies, he informed Hopkins that there was a key three leagues to windward where the ships could lie in safety, and advised that the marines should be despatched by the road which covered the short distance between the eastern shore and the town. Two pilots had been taken aboard from the captured sloops, and Jones had completed a plan with them by which the ships could be safely got into the key. Hopkins was afraid, as he never failed to be, on this and every other occasion, and refused to trust the ships to the pilots. Jones thereupon volunteered to take them in himself. Going with the pilot to the mast-head of the *Alfred*, he succeeded in getting the vessels safe into their anchorage. Here was the first taste of Jones's



quality; first to see an opportunity, first to avail himself of it. This picture of him at the mast-head of the ship might serve as a symbol and forecast of his whole career.

The scheme as he planned it was successful from the moment it was put under his charge. The marines were immediately sent in by the eastern passage in a couple of coal schooners, under the command of Captain Nichols, and, landing without opposition about four miles from Fort Montague, marched upon the town of Nassau and captured both the fort and the town without the loss of a man. Although the British governor had managed to spirit away the powder during the night, the American squadron, sailing into New Providence harbor in early morning, took possession of one hundred cannon and other valuable stores, and a few days later, on the 17th of March, sailed out of the harbor, carrying as hostages Governor Brown himself and two other English officers.

The measure of success which was attained in this first exploit of the new fleet was clearly due to Paul Jones, and this was absolutely everything which was accomplished during this first cruise under Hopkins, the only success ever achieved under his command. On the 5th of April, a fortnight after the fleet left New Providence, it fell in with the British man-of-war *Glasgow*, and in spite of the great numerical superiority of the American squadron the single ship of the enemy, ably commanded by Captain Tyringham Howe, inflicted more damage than she received and got away. This action showed the inefficiency of the war-ships

which composed the first American fleet; they were, in fact, only merchant-ships hurriedly transformed and equipped, but it showed more clearly the inadequacy of the commander-in-chief and the inexperience of the officers. It brought about a full crop of courts-martial and a salutary winnowing of the wheat from the chaff in the matter of commanding officers. On this occasion Jones commanded the lower battery of the *Alfred* and performed his duty bravely and efficiently. If he had been on the quarter-deck, the present station of the first lieutenant, there can be little doubt but that the *Glasgow* would have been captured.

The character of the commanding officer of the new fleet differed, unfortunately, very widely from the distinguished brother to whom he owed his appointment. Ezek Hopkins had been a commander of trading-ships for thirty years and had had some experience in the French war. He was prominent and respected in the affairs of Rhode Island and in Providence, and was by no means an unpromising appointment for the position; but he had grown old in the merchant service and was irascible, obstinate, and utterly inexperienced in the kind of warfare in which he was now engaged. The difficulties of the task imposed upon him were overwhelming, and it cannot be denied that he labored earnestly and at times desperately to overcome them. Unusual ability, the resourcefulness of a Washington or a Greene, the genius which would make bricks without straw were necessary for the men who were to lead America's chaotic forces in this day of beginnings. Ezek Hopkins was not an unusual man, and he failed.

His was one of those singular characters which unite obstinacy with weakness, and presented not the only instance in which obstinacy masqueraded as strength and weakness passed for prudence.

By the 11th of April the fleet had returned to Northern waters and lay moored at New London. General Knox, visiting the commander-in-chief on board the *Alfred* at this time, wrote his impression of his personality to his wife: "The Admiral is an antiquated figure. He brought to my mind Van Tromp, the famous Dutch Admiral. Although antiquated in figure, he is shrewd and sensible, and I, who you think only a little enthusiastic, should have taken him for an angel, only he swore now and then."

No man was more honorable in intention than this antiquated captain of trading-ships; but his limitations in ability and experience were soon to be mercilessly exposed and most severely punished. It took Jones some time to judge the character of the man who was his chief, and while in his first letter to Hewes he expressed himself very freely about Captain Saltonstall, his references to Hopkins are loyal, and indicate that at this time at least he was respected by his men.

From the outset of his naval career it was Jones's custom to send a detailed account of his doings to Hewes; this he considered as a duty to the man who had given him his appointment, and they furnish not only a capital account of the operations of the fleet, but also intimate details in regard to the personnel of the raw colonial forces and frank expressions of his

views in regard to the necessary qualifications of a commanding officer in the navy.

The first of these letters is dated the 14th of April, immediately after his arrival at New London, at the end of the first cruise of the squadron. The first part of the letter contains a very brief account of the New Providence expedition, in which he modestly makes no mention at all of his own agency in the plan which brought about its success.

The account of this engagement is here given as he wrote it in the latter part of his letter to Hewes, and in it it will be seen that he refrains entirely from making any criticism of his most ineffective superior officers, except in one comment, very guarded and possibly even suppressed in the final draft. His feelings, those sensitive feelings of "a man of liberal mind long accustomed to command," have evidently been seriously hurt, and he pours them out in confidence to his friend. Alas! the note of injury is rarely lacking in the many letters preserved of Jones, from this early moment until the end.

Our cruise was now directed back for the Continents, and after meeting with much bad weather, on the 5th. instant off Block Island, we took one of Captain Wallace's (the commander of the British Fleet off B. I.) tenders. The *Hawk* Schooner of six guns. The next morning we fell in with the *Glasgow*, man of war, and a hot engagement ensued; the particulars of which I cannot communicate better than by extracting the minutes which I entered in the *Alfred's* log book, as follows:—

At 2 A. M. cleared the ship for action. At half past 2 ditto, the *Cabot* being between us, and the enemy, began to engage, and soon after we did the same, at the third glass the enemy bore away and by crowding sail at length got a considerable ways ahead; made signals for the ships of the English fleet at Rhode Island to come to her assistance, and steered directly for the harbor. The Commodore then thought it imprudent to risk our prizes by pursuing farther; therefore, to prevent our being decoyed into their hands at half past six made the signal to leave off the chase, and hauled by the wind to join our prizes. The *Cabot* was disabled at the second broadside; the captain dangerously wounded, the master and several men killed. The enemy's whole fire was then directed at us, and an unlucky shot having carried away our wheel block and ropes, the ship broached to and gave the enemy an opportunity of raking us with serving broadsides before we were again in a condition to steer the ship and return the fire. In the action, we received several shot under water, which made the ship very leaky. We had besides the main mast shot through, and the upper work and rigging very considerably damaged. Yet it is surprising that we only lost the second Lieutenant of marines and four men.

At this point the significant comment occurs which has been already referred to. It is crossed out but is perfectly legible.

It is your province to make the natural comments arising from the subject I wish to avoid concerning individuals. The utmost delicacy is necessary and highly becoming in my situation. I therefore content myself with relating facts, and I leave wiser heads the privilege of determining their propriety.

The letter continues as follows:

I have the pleasure of assuring you that the Commander-in-Chief is respected thro' the fleet, and I verily believe that the officers and men in general would go any length to execute his orders. It is with pain that I confine this plaudit to an individual. I should be happy in extending it to every captain and officer in the service; praise is certainly due to some, but alas, there are exceptions. It is certainly for the interest of the service that a cordial interchange of civilities should subsist between superior and inferior officers, and therefore it is bad policy in superiors to behave toward their inferiors indiscriminately, and tho' they were of a lower species, such a conduct will damp the spirits of any man. Would to heaven it were otherwise, but in sad truth this is a conduct too much in fashion in our infant fleet; the ill consequences of this are obvious. Men of liberal minds who have been long accustomed to command can ill brook being thus set at naught by others who claim a monopoly of sense. The rude ungentle treatment they experience, creates such heart burnings as are in nowise consonant with that cheerful ardor and spirit which ought ever to be the characteristic of an officer, and therefore when he adopts such a line of conduct in order to prove it (for to be well obeyed it is necessary to be esteemed) whoever thinks himself heartily in the service is widely mistaken.

The officer here referred to (Jones's own commanding officer) was Captain Saltonstall, and, as has been seen, a relation of John Adams. This relationship in itself tells us that he was not only New England by birth, but, as an Adams appointment, strongly New England in sympathy. There was much sectional jeal-

ousy in the army between the New England and the Southern soldiers, and it is not in any way surprising that this feeling also found its way into the fleet. Captain Saltonstall is described as being sandy-haired, stocky in figure, short-necked, and irascible. With sensibilities and customs formed by the unusual courtesy and the generous and gracious standards of his Southern friends, it is not surprising that Jones found the manners of his superior officer "rude and ungentle."

By the 11th of April the fleet arrived at New London and put up for repairs. Difficulties many and great now surrounded the unlucky Hopkins. A storm of criticism for the escape of the *Glasgow* broke over his head. Small-pox appeared among the sailors and raged with unabated violence for many weeks. Two hundred men from the different ships were laid up in temporary hospitals, and it became wellnigh impossible to man the ships. An astonished and indignant public demanded an explanation as to the so-called disgraceful inefficiency of the newly appointed officers of the fleet. Hopkins was violently assailed, as well as his brother-in-law, Abraham Whipple. The latter put up a spirited defence. This was the same man who destroyed his majesty's ship, the *Gaspé*, in Narragansett harbor in 1772. This incident of that early moment in the budding Revolution has always been celebrated. The correspondence which ensued is characteristic enough to be quoted:

From the British Commander-in-Chief Wallace to Abraham Whipple:

SIR:—

You, Abraham Whipple, on the 10th of June, 1772, burned his Majesty's ship the *Gaspé*, and I will hang you at the yard arm.

From Abraham Whipple to the British Commander:

SIR JAMES WALLACE:—

SIR:—Always catch a man before you hang him.

A gentleman of this temper would not be likely to sit down quietly under undeserved criticism, and he appealed to his brother-in-law and commander as follows:

If I did not do my duty it was not out of cowardice, but for want of judgment, I say all the people of New London look on me with contempt. Therefore, I, having a family of children to be upbraided with the mark of cowardice, and my own character now scandalized thro' the whole thirteen colonies, it is a thing I cannot bear, and if I am a coward, I have no business in the service of the country.

The charges against Whipple were duly investigated in a court-martial, held on May 9, when he was promptly acquitted and restored to the service, in which he remained for many years. Jones was present as a witness at his trial, and defended him, a fact which he was unfortunately compelled to recall to his memory at a later time. Captain Hazard, whose trial took place a few days earlier, on the 1st of May, was convicted of cowardice and broke, and the com-



mand of his ship, the *Providence*, given to Jones. The commander-in-chief at this troublous moment decided to remain on shore, sending three of the smallest ships to sea with the few men he could muster, while the flag-ship and the larger portion of the fleet lay idle in the harbor. Washington had lent two hundred men for a short time to supply the places of those laid up with small-pox; but it was a short-time loan, and the plight of the new fleet was truly a sad one. Most of the available seafaring men had shipped on privateers, and a large number had already been enrolled in the army. It was practically impossible to man the ships or to attempt to win back the respect of the government and the public. Paul Jones, evidently recognized by this time as both active and competent, was sent to sea in the *Providence* with half of Washington's soldiers.

On the 19th of May Jones wrote to Hewes, from New York, a long description of the conditions then prevailing in the fleet, so complete and so interesting that it is here quoted in full. It contains the statement alluded to in regard to Jones's training of the seamen on the *Alfred*, with its significant indication of his previous experience in the British navy:

On board the Sloop *Providence*,  
NEW YORK 19th May, 1776.

SIR:—

I had the honor of writing you the history of our cruise in the Fleet from the Capes of Delaware, till our arrival at New London the 14th ult. enclosing an inventory of all stores taken at North Providence, etc.—

the letter contained a particular account of the action with the *Glasgow* in an extract from the *Alfred's* Log Book—it also contained some free thoughts on certain characters in the Fleet—it was enclosed to Mr. Sproat and by ill luck fell into hands not the most agreeable, on its way to the post-office, for which circumstances I much fear it hath miscarried, for I have just now parted from Captain Lenox and tho he is late from Philadelphia, he hath no account of any letters from me to his uncle, Mr. Sproat.

I now enclose you the Minutes of two Court Martials held on board the *Alfred*, the evidences at large excepted—these minutes have not yet been seen in print—. In consequence of the last trial I was ordered to take the command of this vessel the 10th currt. I arrived here yesterday afternoon in 36 hours from Rhode Island with a return of upwards of 100 men besides officers, which Gen. Washington lent to the Fleet at N. London. I left the *A. Doria* and *Cabot* at Rhode Island ready to sail together for a four weeks cruise. What will become of the *Alfred* and *Columbus* heaven only knows. The seamen have been so very sickly since the Fleet returned to the Continent that it will be impossible to mann them without others can be entered. I have landed Gen. Washington's soldiers and shall now apply to shipping men, if any can be obtained, but it appears that the seamen almost to a man had entered into the army before the Fleet was set on foot, and I am well informed that there are four or five thousand seamen now in the land service.

The unfortunate engagement with the *Glasgow* seems to be a general reflection on the officers of the Fleet, but a little reflection will set the matter in a true light, for no officer who acts under the eye of a superior, and who doth not stand charged by that superior for cowardice or misconduct, can be blamed on any occasion

whatever. For my own part, I wish a general inquiry might be made respecting the abilities of officers in all stations, and then the country would not be cheated. I may be wrong, but in my opinion, a Captain of the Navy ought to be a man of strong and well connected sense, with a tolerable good education, a gentleman, as well as a seaman, both in theory and practice; for want of learning and rude ungentle manner are by no means the characteristick of the officer. I have been led into this subject on feeling myself hurt as an individual by the censures that have been indiscriminately thrown out—for altho my station confined me to the *Alfred's* lower Gun Deck, where I commanded during the action, and tho the Commodore's letter which hath been published says: "all of the officers in the *Alfred* behaved well." yet still the public blames me, among others, for not taking the enemy.

I declined the command of this Sloop at Philadelphia, nor should I now have accepted it, had it not been for the rude, unhappy temper of my late Commander. I now reflect with pleasure that I had philosophy sufficient to avoid quarreling with him and that I even obtained his blessings at parting. May he too soon become of an affable, even disposition, and may he too find pleasure in communicating happiness around him.

There is little confidence to be placed in reports, otherwise the Lieutenants of the Fleet might have reason to be uneasy, when they are told that the several Committees have orders to appoint all the officers for the new Ships, except only the Captains. I cannot think that they will be so far overlooked, who have at first stept forth and shewn at least willingness—nor can I suppose that my own conduct will be in the esteem of Congress such as to subject me to be superseded in favor of a younger officer, especially one who is said not to understand navigation—I mean the Lieutenant of

the *Cabot*, who was put in as Commr. of the *Fly* at Reedy Island, after I had declined it. I was then told that no new Commission would be given, and I considered her as a paltry message boat, fit to be commanded by a midshipman, but on my appointment to the *Providence* I was indeed astonished to find my seniority questioned. The Commodore told me he must refer to the Congress—I have received no new Commission. I wish the matter in dispute may first be cleared up. I will cheerfully abide by whatever you may think is right—at the same time, I am ready at any time to have my pretensions inquired into by men who are Judges.

When I applied for a Lieutenancy, I hoped in that work to gain much useful knowledge from men of more experience than myself. I was, however, mistaken, for instead of gaining information I was obliged to inform others. I formed an exercise and trained the men so well to the great Guns in the *Alfred* that they went through the motions of broadsides and rounds as exactly as soldiers generally perform the manual exercise. When I get what men are to be had, I am ordered back to Providence. The Sloop must be hove down and considered generally repaired and refitted before she can proceed properly on any cruise.

I should esteem myself happy in being sent for to Philadelphia to act under the more immediate direction of Congress, especially in one of the new Ships. I must rely on your interest herein.

The largest, and I think by far the best of the Frigates was launched the day after I left Providence, but from what I can learn, neither of them will equal the Philadelphia Ships. I left the *Columbus* heaving down, and the *Alfred* hauling to the wharf.

I send this by the Commodore's Steward, who hath leave to visit his wife at Phila. and will call on you on

his return in a day or two. I expect that he will overtake me here, if I succeed in getting men; if not, he will follow me to Rhode Island and Providence. May I hope for the honor of a letter from you by his hand; it will most singularly oblige me, and greatly add to the favour already conferred on,

Sir,

Your very much obliged

and very humble servant,

JOHN P. JONES.

N. B. If you have not received my last, I will send you a copy if desired.

The Honorable Joseph Hewes, Esquire,  
Philadelphia.

This letter marks a considerable step in Jones's comprehension of his situation in the new navy. His fear of supersedure was entirely natural, and expressed with no undue violence. His feelings, although aroused, were completely under control, and he professed with characteristic loyalty that he would have due regard for Hewes's opinion and advice. His mind was fully bent on winning success in the cause he had made his own, and he was reaching out for opportunity of larger service, as he realized his own superior powers.

Writing in 1848, Captain Mackenzie, of the American navy, in his life of Paul Jones, gives the following adequate appreciation of his ability and of the services he might have rendered to America if he had been given command at this critical point in her history:

"Could Jones's character have been penetrated and comprehended at the first, and he placed at the head

of our Navy, there can be little doubt that it would at once have assumed a tone and order to which it was long a stranger, and while commending itself to the gratitude of the country by the achievement of glorious deeds, would have greatly accelerated the events which led to the recognition of our Independence."

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST INDEPENDENT COMMAND

ALTHOUGH it was not long before the success and superior abilities of Paul Jones aroused the jealousy of the commander-in-chief, it was Hopkins himself who actually gave him his first step in the service. On the back of his original lieutenant's commission Hopkins wrote out his new commission as captain of the *Providence*, on May the 10th, 1776. Paul Jones by this act assumed his first independent command as captain in the American navy. His first duty, as has been seen in his letter to Hewes of May the 19th, was to convoy the troops lent by Washington from Rhode Island back to New York. He there enlisted as many seamen as he could find for his nearly empty ship, picked up at New London a few more discharged from the small-pox hospital, and returned to Providence. There for a few days he busied himself in getting his small vessel into as good a condition as possible for active service, and on the 13th of June, having received orders from Hopkins to convoy Lieutenant Hacker in the *Fly*, carrying some heavy cannon for the defence of New York, he again set sail for that city. He fell in with two English frigates off Block Island. One of these, the *Cerberus*, mounted thirty-two guns and was a formidable enough antagonist. With her he had two sharp en-

gagements and came off with brilliant success, succeeding in defending his own convoy, and again, at a later date, in saving the *Hispaniola*, heavily laden with much-needed stores for the army, while hotly pursued by the enemy.

His next orders were to proceed to Boston and from thence to convoy some trading-ships to their destination in the Delaware. In the performance of this service he was again called upon to show both his good seamanship and his address in avoiding the numerous ships of war under Lord Howe, which were then arriving in Eastern waters from England and from Canada. He was again successful in this difficult and dangerous undertaking, and brought his convoy safely into port, arriving in the Delaware on August 1, 1776.

Being now at the seat of government, in Philadelphia, Jones lost no time in getting his captain's commission indorsed by full Congressional authority. The colonies had thrown off the yoke of the mother country, and Hancock was then president of the full-fledged Continental Congress. He duly confirmed the appointment given to Jones by Hopkins on May the 10th, by virtue of which he had become commander of the *Providence*, and made out to Jones a regular captain's commission, dated August 8, 1776, the first one granted to any officer subsequent to the Declaration of Independence. This was, as should be noted and remembered, a doubly certified appointment, given first by the commander-in-chief of the navy and afterward confirmed by the president of Congress. On this commission Jones always based his claims for priority in



rank over the thirteen men who were subsequently put above him.

Jones was now once more in communication with his powerful and devoted friend Hewes. The large brigantine *Hispaniola*, which he had saved from the clutches of the *Cerberus*, had been purchased by Congress and renamed the *Hampden*. Hewes influenced the marine committee to offer the command of this large vessel to his successful protégé, who had already made so creditable a record for usefulness and ability in convoying the precious stores of cannon and government supplies safely into their ports. The recognition of these services received ample and prompt reward from the marine committee, who decided to give him orders which completely ignored the authority of the timid and dilatory commander-in-chief of the navy. The official record states that "it was proposed to Captain Jones by the marine committee of Congress to go to Connecticut to command the brigantine *Hampden*, but he, choosing rather to remain in the sloop *Providence*, had orders to go out on a cruise against the enemy for six weeks or two or three months." This choice of the smaller ship is extremely significant and interesting, for it shows that Jones had already very clearly developed his ideas of the kind of warfare possible to the colonial navy. With no chance of competing with the great and long-established marine forces of Great Britain in battle drawn, the only hope of success was in brilliant and unexpected attacks upon defenceless coasts; these attacks could only be made in fast sailing-ships. He ardently desired opportunities to carry out his plan of

attack, and argued his cause with such ardor and ability with Hewes and the marine committee that they were convinced of his wisdom and conceived a flattering idea of his capacity. The orders which they issued to him were very remarkable, as they not only ignored the commander-in-chief, but gave the young captain unlimited directions to go where he pleased and do as he pleased; but it was a remarkable time and a remarkable man who had thus early pushed himself from obscurity. Weaker wills and lesser minds were forced aside by this vital power, now focussed to activity, while his equals, his great-minded contemporaries, then, as always, generously aided and protected him.

On the 21st of August he set sail for a six weeks' cruise, which amply proved the wisdom of his plan and brought him his first taste of personal triumph. His ship was very small, carrying only twelve long fours, but he had already found her fast enough to get out of the way of the enemy's larger ships, and he selected his own crew of seventy men, who proved themselves exceedingly satisfactory to the young and untried commander.

Sailing from the Delaware on the 21st of August, he cruised a week between latitude  $39^{\circ}$  and  $33^{\circ}$ , going to the eastward as far as longitude  $50^{\circ}$  west, and taking three brigs, the *Sea Nymph*, *Favorite*, and *Britannia*; the first two laden with rum, the last a whaler. These valuable prizes he manned and sent home. On the 1st of September, off the island of Bermuda, he sighted a fleet of five sail, the largest of which he took to be a merchantman, and ran down to cut her out. He found

that she was an English frigate, the *Solebay*, of twenty-eight guns, and a fast sailer. With a frigate such as the *Solebay* the little *Providence* had not the slightest chance of a successful encounter, so Jones hauled his wind and made all haste to escape, for his error in thinking the *Solebay* was a merchantman had brought him into imminent danger. Scarcely a week afloat in his own ship, the untried captain of a crew of utterly inexperienced men, he now gave an exhibition of skill and daring worthy of comparison with the smartest pieces of seamanship on record. The frigate began firing, and Jones, hoisting the Continental colors, returned the fire. The English ship attempted to take the *Providence* by hoisting an American ensign in token of amity, but Jones was not to be deceived by so transparent a ruse. The frigate kept on firing, pursuing the *Providence* hotly for more than four hours, finally getting within musket-shot of her prey. The situation was now critical in the extreme, but Jones had already matured a plan of escape, and with great coolness began edging gradually to leeward, so gradually that he aroused no suspicion of his intention until he had brought the *Solebay* on his weather quarter, when suddenly the helm of the *Providence* was put sharply up, and crowding all sails she was off before the wind before the *Solebay* could get a single one of her guns to bear.

A very brief account of this exploit, without a mention of the name of the frigate, was sent in by Jones to the marine committee on the 4th of September. In a letter of the same date to Hopkins, he comments upon

the encounter with natural satisfaction: "Our hair breadth escape and the saucy manner of making it, must have mortified him (the enemy) not a little—he might have fired several broadsides while we were within pistol shot, but he was a bad marksman, and did not hit the *Providence* with one of the many shots which he fired."

Three days later he wrote again, by the brigantine *Favorite*, from Liverpool, which he captured on the evening of September 6. In this letter he observes that he does not expect much success on account of the lateness of the season. His fears were not destined to be realized, as appeared by his next report to the marine committee. This letter gives so clear and agreeable an impression of his habitual temper when in action that it is quoted here in full. His humanity to the English fishermen, the warm commendation of his officers and crew, and the admirable enthusiasm and patience under severe hardships, all expressed with the greatest simplicity, reveal the ideal qualifications of a commander:

*Providence*, off the Isle of Sable,  
30th Sept., 1776.

GENTLEMEN:—

From that time (of despatching the *Favorite*), I cruised without seeing any vessel. I then spoke the *Columbus'* prize, the ship *Royal Exchange*, bound for Boston. By this time my wood and water began to run short, which induced me to run to the northward, for some port of Nova Scotia or Cape Breton. I had, besides, a prospect of destroying the English shipping in these parts. The 16th and 17th, I had a very heavy gale from the

N. W., which obliged me to dismount all my guns, and stick everything I could into the hold. The 19th, I made the Isle of Sable, and on the 20th, being between it and the main, I met with an English frigate,<sup>1</sup> with a merchant ship under her convoy. I had hove to, to give my people an opportunity of taking fish, when the frigate came in sight directly to windward, and was so good natured as to save me the trouble of chasing him, by bearing down, the instant he discovered us. When he came within cannon shot, I made sail to try his speed. Quartering and finding that I had the advantage, I shortened sail to give him a wild goose chase, and tempt him to throw away powder and shot. Accordingly, a curious mock engagement was maintained between us, for eight hours; until night with her sable curtains, put an end to this famous exploit of English knight-errantry.

He excited my contempt so much, by his continual firing, at more than twice the proper distance, that when he rounded to, to give his broadside, I ordered my marine officer to return the salute *with only a single musket*. We saw him, next morning, standing to the westward; and it is not unlikely, that he hath told his friends at Halifax, what a trimming he gave to a "rebel privateer," which he found infesting the coast.

That night I was off Canso harbour, and sent my boat in to gain information. On the morning of the 22nd, I anchored in the harbour, and, before night, got off a sufficiency of wood and water. Here I recruited several men, and finding three English schooners in the harbour, we that night, burned one, sunk another, and in the morning, carried off the third, which we had loaded with what fish we found in the other two.

At Canso I received information of nine sail of ships, brigs, and schooners, in the harbour of Narrow Shock

<sup>1</sup> The *Milford*.

and Peter de Great,<sup>1</sup> at a small distance from each other, in the Island of Madame, on the east side of the Bay of Canso. These I determined to take or destroy; and, to do it effectually, having brought a shallop for the purpose from Canso, I despatched her with twenty-five armed men to Narrow Shock, while my boat went, well manned and armed, to Peter de Great; and I kept off and on with the sloop, to keep them in awe at both places. The expedition succeeded to my wish. So effectual was this surprise, and so general the panic, that numbers yielded to a handful without opposition, and never was a bloodless victory more complete. As the shipping that were unloaded were all unrigged, I had recourse to an expedient for despatch. I promised to leave the late proprietors vessels sufficient to carry them home to the Island of Jersey, on condition that they immediately fitted out and rigged such of the rest as might be required. This condition was readily complied with; and they assisted my people with unremitting application, till the business was completed. But the evening of the 25th brought with it a violent gale of wind, with rain, which obliged me to anchor in the entrance of Narrow Shock; where I rode it out, with both anchors and whole cables a-head. Two of our prizes, the ship *Alexander* and *Sea Flower*, had come out before the gale began. The ship anchored under a point and rode it out; but the schooner, after anchoring, drove, and ran ashore. She was a valuable prize; but, as I could not get her off, I next day ordered her to be set on fire. The schooner *Ebenezer*, taken at Canso, was driven on a reef of sunken rocks, and there totally lost; the people having with difficulty saved themselves on a raft. Towards noon on the 26th, the gale began to abate. The Ship *Adventure* being unrigged and almost empty, I ordered her to be burnt. I

<sup>1</sup> The orthography of the manuscript is followed.

put to sea in the afternoon with the brigantine *Kingston Packet*, and being joined by the *Alexander*, went off Peter de Great. I had sent an officer round in a shallop to order the vessels in that harbor to meet me in the offing, and he now joined me in the brigantine *Success*, and informed me that Mr. Gallagher, (the officer who had commanded the party in that harbor), had left it at the beginning of the gale in the brigantine *Defence*, and taken with him my boat and all the people. I am unwilling to believe that this was done with an evil intention. I rather think he concluded the boat and people necessary to assist the vessel getting out, the navigation being difficult, and the wind at that time unfavourable; and when the gale began, I know it was impossible for them to return.

Thus weakened, I could attempt nothing more. With one of our brigs and the sloop, I could have scoured the coast and secured the destruction of a large boat fleet that was loading near Louisbourg, with the *Savage* and *Dawson* brig only to protect them.

The fishery at Canso and Madame is effectually destroyed. Out of twelve sail which I took there, I only left two small schooners and one small brig, to convey a number of unfortunate men, not short of three hundred, across the Western Ocean. Had I gone further, I should have stood chargeable with inhumanity.

In my ticklish situation it would have been madness to lose a moment. I therefore hastened to the southward, to convey my prize out of harm's way, the *Dawson* brig having been within fifteen leagues of the scene of action during the whole time.

On the 27th I saw two sail, which we took for Quebec transports. Unable to resist the temptation, having appointed a three days' rendezvous on the S. W. part of the Isle of Sable, I gave chase, but could not come up before they had got into Louisbourg, a place where

I had reason to expect a far superior force; and therefore, returned, and this day I joined my prizes at the rendezvous.

If my poor endeavors should meet with your approbation, I shall be greatly rewarded in the pleasing reflection of having endeavored to do my duty. I have had so much stormy weather, and been obliged, on divers occasions, to carry so much sail, that the sloop is in no condition to continue long out of port. I am, besides, very weak handed; and the men I have are scarcely able to stand the deck, for want of clothing, the weather here being very cold. These reasons induce me to bend my thoughts towards the continent. I do not expect to meet with much, if any success, on my return. But if fortune should insist upon sending a transport or so in my way, weak as I am, I will endeavor to pilot him safe. It is but justice to add that my officers and men behaved incomparably well on the occasion.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

JOHN P. JONES.

The Honourable the Marine Committee,  
Philadelphia.

The *Providence* then proceeded to the westward, as he relates in his last report to the marine committee, took another whaler at Saint George's Bank, and on the 7th of October arrived safe at Rhode Island, having manned and sent in eight prizes, namely, six brigantines, one ship, and one sloop, and sunk, burned, and destroyed eight more, namely, six schooners, one ship, and one brigantine, having finished his cruise in six weeks and five days.

Here was success enough and of brilliant enough



quality to raise the spirits of any man. It brought immediate reputation to Jones, and served also as a standard of efficiency to the officers of the infant navy.

The news of these exploits was a vast encouragement to the marine committee, and made a brilliant contrast to the inefficient management of the commander-in-chief. The condition of the fleet was generally exceedingly unsatisfactory, and the unfortunate Hopkins had involved himself in innumerable difficulties.

On the 8th of May, 1776, following the engagement with the *Glasgow*, as previously related, a Congressional inquiry had been ordered to look into Hopkins's management of the fleet. By a resolution of December 1 of the preceding year, eight new ships had been ordered by Congress, two of which were to be built in Providence by a local sub-committee under Hopkins's direction. On his return in the spring from his unsuccessful cruise, Hopkins encountered tremendous difficulties in carrying out these orders, for the members of this sub-committee were themselves engaged in privateering and took away his workmen and his supplies. As a result of his complaints, this committee was dissolved by Congress, and the entire business given into the honest hands of his brother, Stephen Hopkins, but even with this assistance he advanced but little the building of the ships. Complaints of all kinds now arose as the result of this delay, and on August 23 Hopkins went to Philadelphia to face, personally, an inquiry as to his disobedience of orders and the generally unsatisfactory condition of the fleet. He found in John Adams a staunch friend and defender. The New England states-

man was a warm friend of Stephen Hopkins, and naturally did his best to protect his brother. He admitted the inexperience of Hopkins, but insisted that there was no one who could lay claim to superior abilities. Joseph Hewes thought differently; but the New England influence was very strong in Congress, and Paul Jones, away at sea on his cruise, had not yet demonstrated his remarkable qualifications. No better proof could be given of the force and persuasiveness which Adams possessed than his success in saving Hopkins at this time from the results of his incompetency. He was let off with a secret vote of censure and handsomely given another chance to redeem himself. The captured English brig, the *Hawk*, was rechristened the *Hopkins* in his honor, and he received orders on August 28 to proceed at once on board of her to Newfoundland. Once more Adams had carried his way against "time and tide."<sup>1</sup>

Now, indeed, was the time for Hopkins to bestir himself and to get something done in spite of all obstructions and difficulties, but he was quite incapable of meeting the emergency. Not one ship was he able to man and get to sea. The ship which had been named for him, and in which he had been ordered to set forth for the British fisheries in Canada, did not sail.

<sup>1</sup> John Jay, writing to Rutledge, expressed his astonishment at this extraordinary leniency: "What is your fleet and noble Admiral doing? What meekness and wisdom and tender-hearted charity. I cannot think of it with patience, nothing but more than ladylike delicacy could have prevailed on your august body to secrete the sentence they passed upon that petty genius. I reprobate such mincing little zigzag ways of doing business."

He wrote to Congress complaining that there were so many privateers that it was difficult to man the ships. Congress waited until the 10th of October, and then, annoyed but patient still, issued an order for him to go out immediately with the *Alfred*, *Columbus*, *Cabot*, and *Hampden*, and to sail southward for Cape Fear. Again the ships did not sail. The unlucky Hopkins, now realizing that strong effort was imperative, made a desperate fight in the Rhode Island Assembly to get an embargo passed against the manning of privateers. He appealed to his old friends in the State and worked day and night to get the measure passed. He lost by only two votes. He then wrote in despair to Congress, asking for an order to seize the Continental sailors who had been engaged in privateers, but Congress failed to support him. Hopkins, now thoroughly exasperated, lost his head and expressed himself with blasphemous intensity in regard to Congress, who were ordering him to sail and continually preventing him by their support of the privateers. It is impossible not to sympathize with the helpless victim of Congress, which had raised him, at no request of his own, to a position which he was unfitted to occupy and then, for material and interested reasons, refused to interfere with the privateers who were stealing all the available seamen. While he was struggling helplessly with these conditions in the August heat in Philadelphia, and under the fire of Congressional examination, Jones was off at sea. Free and untrammelled in his one fast little ship, with unrestricted orders from Congress, he was sailing on victoriously, taking prize after prize, fairly revelling in this

first opportunity of using his remarkable talents, and exulting in his success.

Jones's official reports to the marine committee are naturally concise, but they show that he always obeyed orders with scrupulous care when they were issued to him, and used his judgment with brilliant success when freedom was granted him.

The 22d of October, after his return to Boston, he was directed by Hopkins to go northward for the principal purpose of rescuing a hundred American prisoners who were working in the coal-mines at Isle Royale. It was also intended to attack the fisheries in Newfoundland. Jones was delighted with the prospect of freeing the prisoners, and declared that it "aroused at once all his feelings of humanity." Hopkins thus delegated his own orders from Congress, while he remained on land to wrestle with the question of the privateers. He put Jones in command of the *Alfred*, the *Providence*, and the *Hampden*; but as it was impossible to man them all, Jones set sail on the 27th with but two ships, the *Alfred* and the *Hampden*, the latter in command of Captain Hoysted Hacker, who promptly ran his vessel on a ledge of rock just outside the harbor, compelling Jones to put back to his anchorage. The season was already very late for this northern expedition, and delay was naturally most exasperating to the man who had just won his first laurels and was eager for further triumphs. Restless as a racer, it was perfectly natural that he should have been irritated by this unnecessary accident, but most unfortunate as well as unwise that he should have vented his

irritation upon Admiral Hopkins, who had given him his command and who was in no way responsible for Hacker's stupidity.

The old sea-captain had witnessed the success of Jones up to this point with no evidence of jealousy or resentment. He had given him his captain's commission, and had just put him in command of the only available ships in the fleet. Jones wrote him a letter of complaint which Hopkins considered an undeserved affront. It was the last straw, and his temper finally gave way. His letter to Jones in reply is significant of his resentment and his sense of injustice:

PROVIDENCE, Oct. 28, 1776.

SIR:—

I received your disagreeable letter, and you are hereby directed to go immediately to Newport with the *Alfred*, and if you think the *Hampden* will not do for the cruise, are to take the *Providence* in her room, and follow the former directions. If I can, I will be in Newport tomorrow.

I am your friend,

EZEK HOPKINS.

This is a brief and simple enough epistle, but its importance at this point is great, for it shows the moment of actual collision between Jones and Hopkins, and marks the turning-point in the latter's attitude toward his aspiring subordinate. From this point on, Hopkins's hand was against Jones, and he lost no opportunity to thwart and torment him. On the 30th of October, Jones, still on land, wrote to Congress to express his annoyance at the delay, asserting that if the

ships had sailed earlier something might have been accomplished.

On his return to Boston at the end of October he wrote another and very interesting letter to his friend Hewes, beguiling his impatience with the relief of expression.

Jones had contemplated with dismay the results of the mania for privateering which had taken possession of the colonists. Every day the Continental seamen were lured away to these privately owned vessels, and half the fleet lay empty in the harbor. Astonished and disgusted by this revelation of character in the people whose cause he had so enthusiastically embraced, he poured out his feelings to his patron as to a man of disinterested candor, protesting his belief that he, at least, was governed by the noblest motives.

When I put in here with the *Providence*, as she has been four months off the ground, my intention was to scrub her bottom, repair her sails and rigging, and proceed to cruise off Sandy Hook, and from thence return to Philadelphia. I was prevented from this by the Commodore's proposing to me to take command of the present expedition against the Coal Fleet off Cape Briton and Fishery of New Foundland with the *Alfred*, *Hampden*, and *Providence*.—I was obliged to take all the men out of the *Providence* and her Prizes which made up my number to about one hundred and forty.—I set out with the *Alfred* and the *Hampden*, the latter under the command of Captain Hacker, who ran his vessel on a rock at the very entrance of the harbor, compelling me to put back. This misfortune obliged me to shift Captain Hacker and all his men into the *Providence* and is by a second loss of time a material drawback to my prospect of success.

Our infant Navy is by no means well established, nor under proper regulations, while self interest prevails. Unless the private emolument in individuals in our Navy is made equal, if not superior to that of our enemies in these Iron times, we cannot hope to repel their force. I am informed, and I have reason to believe it to be too true, that even some of the Gentlemen appointed to fit out the new frigates, are concerned in privateers, and not only wink at, but encourage and employ deserters from the Navy. What punishment is equal to such baseness? And yet these men pretend to love their country. In the English fleet, though they impress the seamen—the Crown gives up the captors all they take, and even allow them a bounty for several things.—And can America expect to raise from nothing a Navy able to repel the powerful enemy, while she holds out scarce a third of the encouragement?—The supposition is absurd. Both the Army and Fleet have experienced the evil effects of such sentiments already, and will experience worse consequences if her mode is not altered. Inclosed I send you a copy of a comparative state of wages in our Navy and in English Fifth Rates—it was made in New Hampshire and sent here by Captain Olney. It is a matter, however, that doth not in any wise concern me—as I have no family or dependants, and probably never will have any—I am easily provided for, and not in the least uneasy on my own account.

On the 2d of November he set sail again in the *Alfred*, in company with the *Providence*, for Newfoundland. Jones had found only thirty men on board the flag-ship of the squadron when he was put in command. With much difficulty he managed to double the number, but the ships were not only pitifully short-handed, but

JOSEPH HEWES.





ill-supplied with water, food, and clothing. He was immediately deserted by the cowardly and inefficient Captain Hacker, who gave him the ship in the fog, and returned in the *Providence* to Newport. Jones was now left to sail alone in the face of difficulties that would have discouraged an ordinary man. He had been delayed by no fault of his own until the hostile coasts he was to visit were bound in ice. The sea was tempestuous, he was buffeted by almost continual gales, and blanketed with the impenetrable white fogs of the northern latitudes. However, he was once more free and afloat, and, perfectly undaunted, he threw all his incomparable powers into the venture, exulting in its dangers and inspiring his ill-clad and scanty crew with his own burning enthusiasm. To his bitter regret he found the harbor at Isle Royale solidly frozen over upon his arrival, and with his small force did not dare to make a land attack for the purpose of freeing the prisoners. The first and most cherished purpose of the expedition was thus defeated, first, by the delay in sailing, due to Hacker's stupidity, and, secondly, by his cowardly desertion. Jones, nevertheless, brought the cruise to a brilliant conclusion. The manner in which he conducted it was typical of all his successes, which were invariably won by superior skill and daring from overwhelming odds, wrenched, as it were, from the very jaws of defeat. He was delighted with his crew, who were equally devoted to him, and with truly disinterested patriotism he paid their wages out of his own pocket on their return to Providence. The men who sailed with Jones in the *Alfred* and *Providence* were as

notable for their patriotism in those days of privateers as their captain, who, as a matter of fact, found them the very best supporters whom he was ever destined to command in the whole course of his career.

Jones sent in his account of this cruise in due course to the marine committee, but the best narrative is contained in the journal which he drew up at his leisure for Louis XVI, in the year 1786.

On the 2nd of November I took off the Coast of Arcadie a Liverpool ship, and soon after, near Louisbourg, I also took the *Mellish*, a large armed vessel having two marine officers and a captain in the land service on board with a company of soldiers. The *Mellish* was carrying a thousand complete uniforms for the army of Generals Carleton and Burgoyne. The *Providence* having left the *Alfred*, without the slightest reason, during the night, I was left alone in the bad season off the enemy's coasts, but altho' I was incommoded with my prisoners, I was not willing to give up my plans. I made a descent upon the coast of Arcadie. I burned a valuable transport which the enemy had run aground. I also burned the warehouse and transports intended for the Cod and Whale business. There was much oil in the warehouses. I then took off the Isle Royale three transports and a fourth laden with cod and furs. I learned through one of these transports that the harbor of Isle Royale was frozen over, which rendered my proposed expedition impossible. My prizes were escorted by the *Flora* (the enemy's) frigate which was invisible in the fog, although only a short distance away. The next day I took a Liverpool corsair carrying sixteen guns, and then I set sail to convoy my prizes to the United States.

Off Boston I again encountered the frigate *Milford*

the *Alfred* carrying few seamen and many prisoners was very inferior in force, and I would have much preferred avoiding an engagement which promised me no advantage but my prizes, particularly the *Mellish*, forced me to risk everything. At the approach of night, I took my position between the prizes and the enemy, and put up a signal light, attracting the enemy in this way to a pursuit. This strategy saved the prizes, (which under cover of night succeeded in getting away). The next day I managed to effect my escape after a serious engagement with the *Milford*, which was interrupted and finished at nightfall by a violent storm. I arrived in Boston with only two days' water and provisions left. My prizes got in safely with the exception of one of the smallest which fell into the hands of the enemy.

The news of the uniforms taken on board the *Mellish* raised the courage of the army under General Washington's command, which was almost destitute of clothing. This timely and unexpected relief contributed not a little to the success of the army at Trenton, which took place immediately after my arrival in Boston. I paid off the crews of the *Alfred* and *Providence* from my own funds, and lent the rest of my ready money to Congress.

It was the middle of December before Jones again arrived in Boston, and he returned not to enjoy the fruit of his triumphs, but to battle against the jealousy which they had aroused. Hopkins was hopelessly alienated and lost no opportunity to show his hostility. He became more and more deeply involved in the difficulties of his situation and more and more incapable of dealing with them. The two new vessels which with much difficulty he had succeeded in completing lay empty in the har-

bor on account of the refusal of Congress to authorize the seizing of the Continental sailors who had deserted to the privateers. Finally, as the crowning and complete disaster, the English fleet, with fifty sail, descended upon the Rhode Island coasts and blockaded him in Narragansett Bay. In the face of this last and overwhelming misfortune, the old man lost both his temper and his judgment completely and gave a pitiable example of helpless rage and inefficiency. He gave orders and revoked them. He broke out into blasphemous attacks against Congress, and he vented his displeasure in particular acts of hostility against Jones. Just before the latter's departure on his second northern cruise, Hopkins had directed him to seize some Continental seamen whom he had found on board the Rhode Island privateer called the *Eagle*. The owners of this ship sued Jones for heavy damages, and upon his return to Boston he found that Hopkins had declined to defend him in the suit, on the grounds that his orders had not been given in writing. It is not surprising that Jones was disgusted at this desertion. On the 12th of January he wrote the following unrestrained opinion of the commander-in-chief to his friend Hewes:

BOSTON, 12th *January*, 1777.

HONORED SIR:

Enclosed I send a copy of my last to you, before I left Rhode Island with the *Alfred* and *Providence*. Since, as I now understand, you were not at that time returned from Carolina to Congress so that the Original hath not perhaps found its way to your hands. I would not wish the Sentiments in it to escape your pe-

rusal for tho' I have express'd myself with a freedom becoming an honest man, yet every word is dictated from a heart that esteems you with perfect gratitude. For the particulars of my late cruise I beg leave to refer you to my letters to the Marine Board. I took a prize which by the within letters you will see I intended for No. Carolina but to my no small concern the prizemaster hath thought proper to break his orders and to go into Dartmouth in this state altho' he had on board a full sufficiency of everything to have enabled him to pursue his voyage. In like manner the captain of the *Providence* thought proper to dispense with his orders and give me the slip in the night, which entirely over-set the expedition. If such doings are permitted, the Navy will never rise above contempt. The aforesaid noble captain doth not understand the first case of plain trigonometry, yet it is averred that he hath the honor and that his abilities have enabled him to command a passage boat between Rhode Island and Providence long before the war was begun. There is a fellow who calls himself a commodore, and who keeps us at awful distance by wearing an English broad pendant. He had lately the honor of being a stick officer, vulgarly called boatswains' mate in an English man of war, and was duly qualified for that high station, if Fame says true, as appears by his deigning to read English. Besides among many evident proofs of his abilities as Post Captain, that might be enumerated—this notable one may perhaps be sufficient—for it seems that in his absence he directs his first Lieutenant to take orders from the Boatswain—Nay 'tis said that on certain occasions he takes the speaking trumpet out of the Lieutenant's hand on the quarter deck and delivers it on the fore-castle to the Boatswain. To be very serious, that such despicable characters should have obtained commissions as Commodores in a Navy is truly astonishing,

and would pass for romance with me unless I had been convinced by my senses of the sad reality. I could easily enumerate many other characters as truly original as commission officers, but it gives me extreme pain to be under the necessity of attacking private characters. It is however some consolation, indeed a great one, that this depravity is not universal. Among other deserving characters that belong to the fleet, I am happy from personal acquaintance to mention Captain McNeill as a gentleman who will do honor to the service. I have conceived a very good opinion also of Captain Thompson from some accounts which I have heard. I need not therefore name this great man, this COMMODORE; tho' I will if call'd upon? and in the meantime I aver that he is altogether unfit to command a frigate of thirty two guns.

As I will probably write you again very soon, I will add no more at this time.

I am with gratitude and esteem,

Hon. Sir,

Your most obliged

Very humble servant

J. P. J.

Endorsed: Copy of a letter to the Honble

J. HEWES, Esqr.

By Express from Council.

Two days after Jones wrote this letter he received written orders from Hopkins to give up the command of the *Alfred*, in favor of Captain Hinman, and to go back to the smaller ship the *Providence*. In justice to Hopkins it is necessary to state that the letter in which he announced his supersedure to Captain Jones contained a statement that Hinman had informed him that he had a commission from Congress which placed him

ahead of Jones. There is no evidence in Hopkins's letter that he himself had received any such communication from Congress, and without such orders the act of displacing Jones from the *Alfred* was unjustified and calculated to inflict the deepest pain and injury. A few days subsequent to this Hopkins delivered himself entirely into the hands of his enemies by a truly absurd example of inefficiency. The *Diamond*, an English frigate, had run aground at Warwick Neck. The English fleet was thirty hours away, and Hopkins had ample time to seize or destroy the ship, but he consumed so much time in contradictory orders and unnecessary delay that she made her escape.

A full account of this affair was written by a Mr. Vesey, a volunteer who had gone aboard the *Providence* when Hopkins took her out to capture the *Diamond*. This account, most unfavorable to Hopkins, was put into Jones's hands. It is creditable to Jones that at this juncture he was still much too mindful of the interests of the common cause to openly publish it, but he sent it to his friend Robert Morris, leaving it to his discretion as to whether it should be read before the marine committee:

BOSTON, *January 21st*, 1777.

HONORED SIR:—

In consequence of the changes which have taken place in my situation since my letters to you of 12th, and 18th current were forwarded from hence,—I have written the within letter to the Marine Board which I must entreat you to look over and lay before them or not as you may judge most expedient. My grateful dependence has been and is on yourself so that I sub-



mit my free sentiments to you with the most implicit confidence. If Mr. H. is at present at Congress—as there is no man whom I respect more than himself—if you please, I should be thankful could he also have an oppy. of looking over the letter.—When you look over the enclosed memorandum which I took down from the mouth of my late prize Master (Mr. Vesey) you will, perhaps, think the Account more extraordinary than even the noted Affair with the *Glasgow*. I am not yet sufficiently informed to risque my Opinion. I have the honor to be with Perfect Esteem and Respect,

Sir, your truly Obligated and very humble servant  
J. P. J.

The Honble. R. M.  
(Indorsement)  
No. 9

Boston, *January* 21, 1777.

Copy of letter to the Honble. Robert Morris, Esqr.  
by Mr. Livingston's Express.

On the same day on which Jones wrote the letter to Morris in regard to Hopkins's disgraceful management of the *Diamond* episode, he wrote an open letter to the marine committee in which he laid before them his treatment by Hopkins. This letter contains some of his justly celebrated phrases in regard to the qualifications of a naval officer, and is therefore quoted in full. The passage italicised was adopted for use in the curriculum of Annapolis as early as the year 1876. It was set as a motto for a theme in the English department at the Academy—and since 1895 has been posted on the first leaf of the note-books used by the midshipmen in that department.

Boston, 21st *January*, 1777.

GENTLEMEN:—

Inclosed you have copies of my letters from the time of my departure on the late Expedition from Rhode Island down to the 12th current. I am now to inform you that by a letter from Commodore Hopkins on board the *Warren*, January 14th, 1777, which came to my hands a day or two ago, I am superseded in the command of the *Alfred* in favor of Captain Hinman, and ordered back to the sloop in Providence River, whether this Order doth or doth not supersede also your Orders to me of the 10th ulto. you can best determine; however, as I understand the late Expedition at his request from a "Principle of Humanity" I mean not to make a difficulty about trifles especially when the good of the service is to be consulted. As I am unconscious of any neglect of duty or misconduct since my appointment at the first as Eldest Lieutenant of the Navy, I cannot suppose that you have intended to set me aside in favor of any man who did not at that time bear a Captain's commission, unless indeed that man by exerting his Superior abilities, hath rendered or can render more important Services to America, those who step't forth at the first in Ships altogether unfit for War, were generally considered rather as frantic than as Wise men, for it must be remembered that almost everything then made against them, and altho' the Success in the affair with the *Glasgow* was not equal to what it might have been, yet the blame ought not to be general. The Principle, or Principals in command alone are Culpable, and the other Officers while they stand unimpeached have their full Merit. There were it is true, divers Persons from misrepresentation put into commission at the beginning, without fit qualification, and perhaps the number may have been increased by later appointments, but it follows not that the gentleman or man of merit

should be neglected or overlooked on their account; *none other than a gentleman, as well as a Seaman both in Theory and Practice, is qualified to support the Character of a commission officer in the Navy, nor is any Man fit to command a ship of War, who is not also capable of communicating his ideas on paper in Language that becomes his Rank*; if this be admitted, the foregoing Assertion will be sufficiently Proved, but if farther proof is required, it can be easily produced.

When I entered into the Service, I was not actuated by Motives of Self Interest. I stept forth as a free citizen of the World in defence of the Violated Rights of Mankind, and not in search of Riches whereof, I thank God, I inherit a sufficiency, but I should prove my degeneracy were I not in the highest degree Tenacious of my rank and seniority. As a Gentleman I can yield this point up only to a Gentleman of Superior Abilities and of superior Merit, and under such a Man it is my highest Ambition to learn.

As this is the first time of my having Expressed the least Anxiety on my own Account, I must entreat your Patience until I account to you for the Reason which hath drawn from me this Freedom of Sentiment. It seems that Captain Hinman's Commission is No. 1, and that in consequence he who was at first my Junior Officer by Eight, hath expressed himself *as my Senior Officer*, in a manner which doth himself no honor, and which doth me signal Injury. There are also in the Navy persons who have not shown me fair Play after the Services which I have rendered them. I have even been blamed for the Civilities which I have shown to my Prisoners, at the request of one of whom I herein inclose an Appeal, which I must beg you to lay before the Congress. Could you see the Appellant's accomplished lady, and the three Innocents, their children, Arguments in their behalf would be unnecessary. As the base-minded only are

capable of inconsistencies, you will not blame my free Soul which can never stoop where I cannot also Esteem. Could I, which I never can, bear to be superseded I should indeed deserve your contempt and total neglect. I am therefore to entreat you to employ me in the most enterprising and Active service, accountable to your honorable Board only for my Conduct, and connected as much as possible with Gentlemen and Men of sense.

When I was fitting out for my late expedition at Rhode Island, the persons concerned in Privateers inveigled away the Seaman so fast that Commodore Hopkins repeatedly gave me express Orders that whenever I met with a Privateer, I should cause her to be strictly searched, and if I found a single Man belonging to the Fleet I must take out all who had deserted and as many more as I thought proper, so that I left a number barely sufficient to Navigate the Vessel into Port.

In consequence of this Order I sent my Boat to examine the Privateer Schooner *Eagle* in Tarpawling Cove, and finding two Men belonging to the Fleet, and two more belonging to the Rhode Island Brigade, concealed in such remote parts of the Vessel that my Officer was obliged to break open a bulkhead before he could come at them. I took them with Twenty others on board the *Alfred* and proceeded. To my great surprise I have now received a letter from my Attorney Col. Tillinghast, of Providence informing me that an Action hath been entered against me there, by Samuel Aborn and the persons concerned in the Privateer for Ten Thousand Pounds Lawful Money, altho' the Vessel was then inward bound, but what is truly Astonishing is, that the Commodore (as I am informed) should prevaricate in the matter. Because forsooth, *the Order was not given in writing*. I do not apprehend that he means to justify me in it; however be the consequence what it will, I glory in having been

the first who hath broke thro' the shameful Abuses which have been too long practiced upon the Navy by Mercenaries whose governing principle hath been that of self interest.

Colo. Tillinghast hath entered an action against the Owners of a Privateer, in behalf of the Continent for the same sum, and the first Monday of next Month this important Cause is to be determined.

One of my Prizes with Coal from Cape Breton got into Rhode Island and was retaken after standing the fire of three of the Enemy's Ships; another of the Coal Ships was retaken, and carried to New York by the Frigate that chased the *Alfred* on the edge of St George's Bank, but it doth not appear that she retook the *John*. The *Active* and *Mellish* are safe at Dartmouth, the *Kitty*, is in this Port, so that the *John*, and one of the Coal Transports, are the only Prizes whereof we have had any Account, the first Frigate that chased me in the *Providence* was the *Solebay*, that within the Isle of Sable was the *Milford*.

I am now employing myself to settle the *Alfred's* and *Providence's* Books and pay off the Men whose term of Entry is expired, when I have the honor of hearing from the Board, I must request that the Letters may be forwarded thro' the hands of Messrs. Livingston and Turnbull of this City, meantime I have the Honor to be with great Respect and Esteem,

Gentlemen,

Your Very Obligated

Very Obedient

and most humble servant.

J. P. J.

The Honorable

The Marine Board.

(Indorsement)

The Honble; The Marine Board of Boston, 21 January, 1777.

Later note added by Jones to copy in his own hand retained by him:

At this time I was uninformed of the arrangement of naval rank for Captains (adopted) the 10th Oct. 1776.

No direct reply was ever made by either Morris himself or the marine board to this moderate and dignified appeal. A far more serious injustice of the same kind had actually been authorized by the board in the place they had permitted to be assigned to Jones on the new list of naval appointments. Of this new list, as stated in the above indorsement, Jones was at this time completely ignorant. It had been made out and confirmed on October 10, in the autumn of the preceding year, when he was away on his first northern cruise and before the added triumphs of his second had so largely increased his reputation. The marine committee, unable to alter the adopted list of naval appointments, sought for some means of rendering justice to the hero of these exploits and of furnishing him opportunity for further deeds of daring.

On the 5th of February they issued orders for him to take full command of the fleet, and to proceed to the southward to operate against Pensacola, which orders were conveyed to him in the following letter from Robert Morris:

PHILADELPHIA, *Feb'y* 1st, 1777.

JOHN PAUL JONES, ESQR.

*Sir :*

I have frequently received your letters advising me the particulars of your several Cruizes, and with pleasure [assure?] you the contents in every instance have been very acceptable, always entertaining and

in many parts useful. These letters I have from time to time communicated to the Members of the Marine Committee all of whom express their satisfaction with your conduct. You would no doubt expect an answer from them to your proposal for a Cruise this winter on the coast of Africa, and such they intended to give you long since, but the confusion occasioned by their removal from this City, and the multiplicity of business that has unavoidably crowded on every member of Congress put it out of their power to give that attention to your department that they would always wish to carry into every American concern. Thus circumstanced they never doubted that your Active genius would find useful employment for the Ship under your command, as you were so near the Commodore and could go cloathed with his authority, and they have not been disappointed, for you have in that way made a most useful and successful voyage to Cape Breton and thence to Boston. Major Frazer passing through this City (which I have never left) sent me an Account of that Cruise, which appeared to be in your own handwriting. Pleased with your success I transmitted it to Congress, and wrote that if they pleased I would point out an enterprise or two for you to undertake and leave the choice to yourself. This was agreed to and my present design is to fulfil that promise. When I made it I had in view either to gratify your desire, by undertaking an expedition as you proposed to the Coast of Africa, or to gratify my own by undertaking what I think will prove a more useful one nearer home.

I have pretty good information that there is stationed at Pensacola only two or three Sloops of war from 10 to 16 Guns and that at that place there is not less than 100 pieces of Artillery which our armies are much in want of. These insignificant Sloops of war lay there in perfect security, and now and then take

a Cruize along the Coast of Georgia and Carolina. Should they be met with they will immediately become your Prizes. Should they be out of the way Pensacola may become the more easy prey. It is true that Govr. Chester has been trying to put that place in a State of defence, but he has no troops and the Inhabitants will never defend it; therefore, my plan is that you should take the *Alfred*, *Columbus*, *Cabot*, *Hampden* and Sloop *Providence*—proceed just to the Island of St. Christophers where a Sudden and unexpected attack will carry that place being very defenceless. There is a number of Cannon and Stores there, as well as Merchandise of various sorts that we are in want of, and I fancy you will make a considerable booty. This, however, is not what I have so much in view as to alarm not only the Inhabitants but the whole British Nation. It will oblige the Ministers to provide for the security and protection of every Island they have, and that means this must divide their forces and leave our coasts less carefully guarded.

From St. Kitts (where your stay must be short) you can proceed down to Pensacola. I apprehend the best passage might be down the South side of Hispaniola, and then you might give an alarm to the North side of Jamaica by putting into some of the Ports there, cutting out their ships, &c, in all which you must be expeditious or their fleets will be after you. Should you decline meddling with Jamaica the best passage will be down the North side of Hispaniola, through the passage of Cape St. Nicholas and Cape Maize and then down the north side of Cuba. When you arrive at Pensacola it may be well to send a Brigantine & Sloop to Cruize to the Mouth of the Mississippi so long as you remain in that quarter, but they should wear English colors and never go so near into the Bazine as to be known for anything but English Cruizers. There is at this time not less than £100,000 Sterling



value in goods up that River. The Remittances for which will come away in the Months of March, April and May, in Indigo, Rice, Tobacco, Skins and Furs, so that this alone is an object worthy of your attention. But as I have said before, destroying their settlements, spreading alarms, showing and keeping up a spirit of enterprise that will oblige them to defend their extensive possessions at all points, is of infinitely more consequence to the United States of America than all the Plunder that can be taken. If they divide their forces we shall have elbow room and that gained we shall turn about and play our parts to the best advantage, which we cannot do now, being constantly cramped in one part or another. It has long been clear to me that our Infant fleet cannot protect our own Coasts; and the only effectual relief it can afford us is to attack the enemy's defenceless places and thereby oblige them to station more of their Ships in their own Countries, or to keep them employed in following ours, and either way we are relieved so far as they do it. I do not pretend to give you any account of the Coasts and Harbours, strength of Fortifications or mode of attack, for I cannot doubt your being well Acquainted with these things, knowing as I do that you have been a Commander in the West India trade, and at any rate your appearance will be unexpected and the enemy unprepared. They have no Troops and the very sound of a great Gun will frighten them into submission. Governor Chester will no doubt know where the Brass Artillery are deposited and be Glad to surrender them as a Ransom for himself and his Capital.

When your business is done at Pensacola you may give them an alarm at St. Augustine but they have some Troops & you must be careful of your men. I think you should carry with you as many Marines as possible, for they will be useful & Necessary in all

your Land excursions. The Southern Colonies wish to see part of their Navy, and if you find it convenient and safe you might recruit and refit at Georgia, South or North Carolina, there make a sale of such part of your Prize goods &c as would be useful to them, learn where there was the safest Port to the Northward, and then push along to such place of safety as might be necessary for refitting and remanning the fleet.

Should you prefer going to the Coast of Africa, you have the consent of the Marine Committee, but in that case I apprehend you only want the two ships and the Sloop *Providence*. Remember, it is a long voyage. That you cannot destroy any English settlements there, and that if you meet any of their men-of-war in those seas they will be much superior to you in strength &c. You may, it is true, do them much mischief, but the same may be done by Cruizing to Windward of Barbadoes as all of their Guinea Men fall in there. However, you are left to your choice and I am sure will choose for the best. Should there be a difficulty in getting all the Vessels fully manned with so many Seamen as you may think necessary, take the more Marines and you will get seamen from Prizes in the Course of your Voyage. It is a Standing Instruction from the Marine Committee to the Commanders in the American Navy to be careful of their ships, their Materials and Stores; to use well their Officers and men, preserving, however, strict discipline. To treat Prisoners with humanity and generosity and to keep them advised of their proceedings as frequently as circumstances will admit.

Wishing you success, I am Sir,

Your hble servant,

ROBERT MORRIS V: P:

P. S:—If you get the brass Pieces send them into the first Port in these states and have them valued.

The magnitude of these orders came as a complete surprise to Jones, who was not only ignorant of the degree of the impression which his exploits had made upon the marine committee, but also of the desire of Congress to undo an injustice hitherto unsuspected by him. Hopkins, thoroughly inimical, refused to carry out the orders of Congress. No sooner had he received the orders than he sent the *Cabot* out for a six weeks' cruise, ordering out also the *Hampden* and the *Alfred*, under Hinman. Having thus disposed of three of the available ships of the fleet, he announced to Jones that it was impossible for him to carry out the orders of Congress. After waiting until the 28th of February, Jones wrote to Hopkins:

It is unnecessary for me to inform you, as I have already done, that I am appointed by a letter from the Honorable President of the Marine Committee, dated the 5th current, to take command of the *Alfred*, *Columbus*, *Cabot*, *Hampden* and sloop *Providence*, and to call on you for every possible assistance within your power, to enable me to proceed forthwith on a private enterprise of the greatest importance to America. The letter has the sanction and the full authority of Congress. It is written in their names. Therefore, Sir, I repeat my application, and demand your hearty and complete concurrence with me in the outfit.

It is in vain for you to affect to disbelieve my appointment. I should have appeared personally at Providence had you not justified my conduct by leaving me as you have done in the lurch.<sup>1</sup>

I could have convinced you of its being your indispensable duty to give me every possible assistance.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the affair with the *Eagle*.

When I placed confidence in you I did not think you capable of prevarication. I then, when you needed friends, gave you most convincing proof of my sincerity; this you must remember.

I asked Captain Saltonstall how he could in the beginning suspect me as you have told me, of being unfriendly to America. He seemed astonished at the question and told me it was yourself who promoted it. However, waiving everything of a private nature; the best way is to co-operate cheerfully together that the public service may be forwarded, and that scorn may yet forbear to point the finger at a Fleet under your command.

I am in earnest in desiring to do everything with good nature; therefore to remove your doubts if you have any, I send you this by express, to inform you that I will meet you at Pawtucket, or at any other place, on as early a day as you please to appoint, and will then produce credentials to your satisfaction. In the meantime it is your duty to prevent the departure of the *Cabot*, or any other vessel of the squadron. I am astonished to hear that you have ordered the *Hampden* out without desiring an explanation; after you received my last letters.

My appointment was unsolicited, unexpected and it must be owing to the hurry of business that you have received no similar orders.

I am, Honorable Sir,

Your very obliged,

Most humble servant,

JOHN PAUL JONES.

P. S. I have sent by the bearer the coat which you desired, and likewise one for Mr. Brown. If I can render you any service here in procuring other articles, acquaint me with the particulars, and my best endeavors shall not be wanting.

As one of the earlier biographers of Jones remarks, the mixture of conciliatory overtures with the peremptory language of this epistle shows that personal pique was tempered with a predominating desire to serve his adopted country at all sacrifice.

On March the 1st Hopkins replied to Jones, absolutely declining to carry out the orders of Congress. He declared that he considered it "Impossible to get those vessels fitted or manned for your proposed expedition," and that he would acquaint the marine board with his reasons.

A letter preserved among the Continental Congress papers shows that he had actually received the orders of Congress in due time and had disingenuously concealed the fact.

Jones was now finally forced to the conclusion that nothing was to be expected of his enemy, and departed in the early days of March for Philadelphia to lay the matter before his friends in Congress.

Hopkins had once more openly disobeyed the orders of Congress, and was rushing rapidly toward his destruction. At the very moment when he was pursuing his hostile policy toward his too successful subordinate a conspiracy was set on foot which resulted in his dismissal from the command of the fleet.

The discontent of his officers found ready instruments in the hostile representatives of the privateers, who, by virtue of their sponsors' share in the building of the new ships, could command great influence in Congress. Emissaries were sent to Philadelphia who represented to the members of Congress that

the commander of the fleet had described them as a "pack of ignorant clerks who knew nothing at all." This was the final undoing of the unfortunate Ezek Hopkins.

Congress could be patient with utter inefficiency, and even forgive open disobedience of orders, but could not pardon this insult to its dignity. Hopkins denied that he had made these invidious remarks and sued his detractors; but Congress, now thoroughly partisan, actually paid out of its depleted coffers for the defence of Hopkins's accusers, and a few months later, in January, 1778, the outraged dignitaries formally disgraced and removed him from his command.

His refusal to give the ships to Jones was the last act of his hostility, but as events turned out it was effectual in working harm to his enemy, and proved a serious obstruction to the operations of the navy.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUPERSEDURE IN RANK

ALTHOUGH Jones's removal from the command of the *Alfred* had been a matter for astonishment and chagrin, he was so far able to subdue his natural feelings of irritation and injustice as to speak and write of it as a "trifle." His annoyance at Hopkins's refusal to give him possession of the fleet was naturally greater; but he was conscious of the inferior ability and waning power of his jealous adversary, and did not consider that this act of hostility on his part would be of permanent effect. He believed that Congress would carry out its plans for extensive naval operations, of which he should be the director and commander, and that the minor matter of his removal from the command of the flag-ship would be compensated by his appointment to the command of the whole squadron. His confidence was entirely natural at this time, for although the orders of the marine committee were of a magnitude which astonished him, they did not surpass his own opinion of his deserts.

In the few months which had elapsed since his appointment he had excelled all the other officers in the navy by the number and brilliancy of his accomplish-

ments, and had become without question the most famous and important individual in the service. It cannot be said that any lack of modesty is discernible at this time in his valuation of himself, but that valuation had become necessarily clearer as he compared himself with others and tested his own powers. His personal ambition grew rapidly with its gratification, but did not go beyond his grave sense of responsibility or his genuine devotion to the cause of his adopted country.

In the great crises of human history leaders are rapidly developed. Paul Jones had conclusively demonstrated his pre-eminent qualifications for command, and had himself become fully conscious of the fact. The freedom of opportunity offered to him in this, the formative period of a new nation, was now nullified by the irregularity which necessarily characterized the experimental and changing regulations of its government. Much dissatisfaction had been expressed at the irregularity of the navy appointments, and as far back as April, 1776, a resolution had been passed by Congress "that the nomination of captains and commanders would not determine rank, which should be settled before commissions were granted." This resolution served to nullify any equitable claims for priority which might be urged by any officer of any rank whatever, and left every question of this kind open for the definite alignment embodied in the navy list of October 10, 1776, which exhibited a truly extraordinary irregularity and disregard of merit. This list brought forth repeated protests and aroused mani-



fold resentment, but Congress obstinately refused to alter it.

The following is the list of naval appointments:

NO.	COMMANDERS	VESSELS	GUNS
1	James Nicholson.....	Virginia.....	28
2	John Manly.....	Hancock.....	32
3	Hector McNeill.....	Boston.....	24
	Dudley Saltonstall.....	Trumbull.....	28
	Nicholas Biddle.....	Randolph.....	32
	Thomas Thompson.....	Raleigh.....	32
	John Barry.....	Effingham.....	28
	Thomas Read.....	Washington.....	32
	Thomas Grinnell.....	Congress.....	28
	Charles Alexander.....	Delaware.....	24
	Lambert Wickes.....	Reprisal.....	16
	Abraham Whipple.....	Providence.....	28
	John B. Hopkins.....	Warren.....	32
	John Hodge.....	Montgomery.....	24
	William Hallock.....	Lexington.....	16
	Hoysted Hacker.....	Hampden.....	
	Isaiah Robinson.....	Andrew Doria.....	14
	Paul Jones.....	Providence.....	12
	James Josiah.....	—	
	Elisha Hinman.....	Alfred.....	28
	Joseph Olney.....	Cabot.....	16
	James Robinson.....	Sacham.....	10
	John Young.....	Independence.....	10
	Elisha Warner.....	Fly.....	
	Lieut. John Baldwin.....	Wasp.....	8
	Lieut. Thomas Albertson.	Musquito.....	4

It will be seen that James Nicholson, of Maryland, was put at the head of this list. It is impossible now to assign the reasons for this appointment, as he had received his captain's commission on June 6, 1776, subsequent to Saltonstall, Whipple, Biddle, and John

B. Hopkins, who had been assigned to that rank by the first Congressional resolution of December 22, 1775. This was an evident injustice to these men, who bitterly resented the supersedure. It was likewise an injustice to Jones, whose captain's commission had been given him by Hopkins on the 10th of May, 1776, a month previous to that of Nicholson. That the four captains of the original list of 1775 should have preceded Jones was no injustice as far as priority was concerned, nor was it wrong, for the same reason, that Manly, sailing as captain under Washington's commission, or Barry, holding the first Congressional appointment, should precede him. With the disgrace and removal of Hopkins, Nicholson became the ranking officer in the navy, and its nominal head. Jones's claim for the right to hold this important rank was based on the fact that the commission issued to him by Hancock on the 8th of August, 1776, after the Declaration of Independence, was thus the very first to be issued with full governmental authority.

That he should have hoped for the first place on the list for this reason, and probably expected to obtain it if the orders of Congress to put him at the head of the fleet had been carried out, would not be surprising. As a matter of fact, he did not demand it, but only contended for his proper rank, which, as he stated with perfect truth and justice, should have been fifth instead of eighteenth on the list. Even at a later period, when only one captain of senior appointment remained in the service, he merely asked to be restored to his proper place, in spite of all the *éclat* of his triumphs

and all the influence which his friends brought to bear to put him officially, as he was actually, at the head of the navy.<sup>1</sup>

There were several reasons which brought about this situation, the principal one being the absence of Jones's indispensable friend, Joseph Hewes, from his accustomed seat in Congress. Utterly worn out by his prodigious exertions in connection with the equipment of the marine, he returned in September, 1776, to North Carolina, and was absent at the time the naval list was adopted. When the general assembly of his State convened in the spring of 1777, he failed in re-election to his seat in Congress, and was therefore still absent from Philadelphia when Jones journeyed there for the purpose of laying his wrongs before that body. Too faultless in his modest but undeniable virtues, Hewes had aroused enmity even in happy Edenton, and the opponents of this Southern Aristides so vigorously urged the technical illegality ignored in other States, of his holding seats in the North Carolina and the Continental Congresses at one and the same time, that he failed for this one term only of election to the latter body. Jones therefore missed his assistance in his attempt to rectify his supersedure. Other reasons, afterward explained to Jones by Hewes, for the injustice that had been done him were found in

<sup>1</sup> Although on some occasions displaying notable bravery, Captain Nicholson was far from fortunate in his naval services, having permitted two frigates under his command to be captured by the enemy; and having been guilty of writing a disrespectful letter to the Governor of Maryland, from which State he had been appointed to the navy, he was on May 1, 1777, suspended from his command.

the fact that there was a great multitude of applications for appointments in the navy, and that the demands of the towns and communities which had contributed funds for ship construction had to be satisfied and their candidates recognized. Besides this, the New England influence was still very strong in Congress, and much jealousy existed between the North and the South even in those early days. The superior elegance and social claims of the officers coming from the aristocratic States of Virginia and the Carolinas aroused a natural enmity, which found expression in the remark of Jones's antagonist, John Adams, always a warm supporter of Hopkins, when he ill-naturedly described Jones as "this stranger from the South." Jones was at sea on his first independent cruise, Hewes was away, and Morris had no reason as yet for any belief in his extraordinary merit, for he had received as yet only one letter from Jones, that of September 4, with its brief account of his first exploits. As a matter of fact, neither Morris nor any other member of the marine committee were then aware of Jones's extraordinary capacity, and in the absence of this knowledge and of any particular advocate of his merit, the demands of the other officers were recognized. A few months later, on the 1st of February, when they had been aroused to enthusiasm by the news of his successes, this same marine committee, in total disregard of the naval list they had so hurriedly adopted, wished to put him at the head of the navy.

The characteristically clear account of the matter contained in a letter from Jones to Morris in the year

1783, and which he had prepared for presentation to Congress at that time, is here appended:

I became captain by right of service and succession, and by order and commission of his Excellency Ezek Hopkins, commander-in-chief, the tenth day of May 1776, at which time the captain of the *Providence* was broke and dismissed from the Navy by a Court Martial. Having arrived in Philadelphia with a little convoy from Boston soon after the Declaration of Independence, President Hancock gave me a captain's commission under the United States, dated the 8th day of August 1776. I did not at the time think that this was doing me justice, as it did not correspond with the date of my appointment by the commander-in-chief. It was however, I presume, the first naval commission granted under the United States. And as a resolution of Congress had been passed on the 17th day of April 1776 that the nomination of captains should not determine rank which was to be settled before commissions were granted, my commission of the 8th of August 1776 must by that resolution take rank of every commission dated the 10th of October 1776. My duty brought me again to Philadelphia in April 1777, and President Hancock then told me that new naval commissions were ordered to be distributed to the officers. He requested me to show him the captain's commission he had given me the year before. I did so. He then desired me to leave it with him a day or two, till he could find a leisure moment to fill up a new commission. I made no difficulty when I waited on him the day before my departure, to my great surprise he put into my hands a commission dated the 10th day of October 1776, and number 18 on the margin. I told him that this was not what I expected, and requested my former commission. He

turned over various papers on the table, and at last told me he was sorry to have lost or mislaid it. He paid me so many compliments on the service I had performed in vessels of little force, and assured me no officer stood higher in the opinion of Congress than myself, a proof of which he said was my late appointment to the command of secret expeditions, with five sail and men proportioned, against St. Kitts, Pensacola, Augustine, and so forth. That the table of Naval rank that had been adopted the 1st of October had been drawn up in a hurry and without well knowing the different merits and qualifications of the officers. That it was the intention of Congress to render impartial justice, and always to honor, promote and reward merit. And to myself that I might depend on receiving a very agreeable appointment soon after my return to Boston, and until I was perfectly satisfied respecting my rank, I should have separate command.

It is plainly evident from this account that the courteous and elegant Hancock found himself in an awkward predicament. He was naturally in sympathy with the members of the New England party in Congress, and was of no caliber to stand out against their claims or to remove their candidates after they had once been appointed. Thus Jones was deprived of his proper rank in the navy—rank which, to quote his own noble and characteristic phrase, “opens the door to glory.”

This injustice was destined to bring about very serious results; for although his reputation suffered little, an irremediable bent was given to his mind, which had already shown dangerous tendencies to carry all its processes to the extreme limit, and which finally made

him into a man with a grievance, a rôle which nature had never intended he should fill.

He bore with perfect courage and unusual philosophy the results of the Mungo Maxwell affair. With less composure he had been overwhelmed in the second black period of ill-luck which had followed the killing of the mutineer. Just recovered from this, and but lately emerged into the light of noble effort and successful accomplishment, this unjust supersedure in rank roused a brooding sense of ill-desert to which he too often gave utterance, and which remained to the last the most unsympathetic trait in his character.

Washington's fury at a like insult in the days of his early colonial campaigns is recorded in his own uncompromising terms. Benedict Arnold's fiery and less-balanced nature was utterly overthrown by the same careless disregard of transcendent merit, the same obstinate refusal to recognize and rectify a wrong. If Congress had been guilty of errors and injustice to the officers of its newly organized navy, it had, on the other hand, great reasons for dissatisfaction with their exploits. Little, indeed, had been done by the regular naval forces, owing to Hopkins's incapacity and the overwhelming predominance of the privateers. It is astonishing to read that these privately commanded vessels actually captured as many as three hundred British ships during the year 1776. Agriculture was practically abandoned in many States in favor of this very lucrative form of enterprise, and most of the available men were engaged by the privateers.

The fleet under Hopkins never went out after its first cruise to New Providence. The gallant Nicholas Biddle, who was destined to end his brief career in the following year, made one cruise of a brilliancy almost equalling those of Jones. Barry took a number of ships, and Captain Hardy, of Connecticut, and Captain Waters, in Manly's old ship, the *Lee*, captured some transports with five hundred British soldiers off Nantasket Roads; but most of the original fleet lay empty and useless in Narragansett Bay. The autumn of 1776 was, in fact, the hour of the blackest discouragement for the patriot cause, and the times were desperately critical. When Washington, at the head of his rapidly disintegrating force, reported that many of his men were actually naked and none of them fitly clad for service, the news of the capture of the *Mellish*, which arrived just before the battle of Trenton, came as heaven-sent succor. The action of Congress was calculated to deprive the country of the most efficient officer in the navy, and yet it was only Jones's public spirit and his noble self-forgetfulness which prevented this calamity. Washington himself, at this very moment, wrote to Congress that "the want of regimental promotion has already driven some of the best officers that were in the Army, out of the service."

To understand the reasons which made such faulty and vacillating measures possible to the government, it is necessary to recall that the navy list was adopted in the month of October, 1776, only a few weeks before Congress fled in panic from Philadelphia. The noble body of statesmen and orators did not acquit them-



selves with common-sense or common courage at this most critical moment in the history of America. It was the darkest hour of the Revolution. The enemy was in possession of New York; the disaster of Long Island had been followed by the loss of the Hudson River forts. The army of Washington was rapidly going to pieces, and the traitor Lee was holding back the forces under his command from assisting the commander-in-chief. The country was in despair and panic was spreading rapidly among the people, the army, and the members of Congress. Washington informed the president of that body that he believed that Howe intended immediately to take possession of Philadelphia. The absurd refusal of the people who were waging war against illegal taxation to submit to the obvious necessity of proper taxation to carry on the war kept the treasury empty, and the no less absurd system of short enlistments reduced the army to a miserable and changing handful. Howe's offers of amnesty were being widely accepted, and the ignorant brutality of the Hessian mercenaries, which despoiled both patriot and Tory alike, had not yet driven the hesitating farmers to protect their homes by joining the patriot army. Washington himself, writing privately to his brother, declared that "if every nerve is not strained to recruit the army with all possible expedition, I think the game is up." In November the British advanced to Trenton, and rumors of Hessians and Highlanders marching from Burlington toward Cooper's Ferry threw Philadelphia into a turmoil. A wild scene of distress ensued, with every one hurriedly departing

except the Quakers. Congress fled precipitately to Baltimore, leaving accounts unpaid and papers in confusion. Robert Morris remained practically alone at the seat of government to carry on its affairs. The marine board held its sessions in Baltimore, where the entire personnel of Congress was accommodated, with the exception of the affluent Hancock, "who hired a whole house to himself," but took this opportunity to abandon his labors as president of the governing body to journey off to Boston to see "his dear Dolly," from whom he declared he could not bear to be separated.

John Adams, at this juncture, was also an absentee, having rejoined his Portia for the three months' vacation which Congress had allowed him. Although Washington in his truly desperate state had anticipated an attack upon Philadelphia, John Cadwalader, the commander of the excellent body of Philadelphia militia called the "Silk Stocking Brigade," was furious at the departure of Congress, and wrote indignantly to Morris of what he considered its premature and cowardly flight. As a matter of fact, Morris himself was almost the only one who did not merit Cadwalader's reproaches. He sent his library to the country and his wife to his relatives in Baltimore, and set himself to the truly titanic task of directing alone and unaided the affairs of the disorganized government.

Bending over this forge where new forces were to be hammered out from the chaotic elements of a disrupted and newly forming civilization, he gave every-

thing which he was and owned to the cause of human liberty.

A letter, written just four days before the unlooked-for victory of Trenton illumined what had hitherto been unrelieved darkness and discouragement, gives a picture detailed and even humorous of the unique situation in which he found himself:

The sudden departure of Congress from this place, seems to be a matter of much speculation, and people who judge of events, think they have been too precipitate; be that as it may, many things are thrown into great confusion by it, and I find ample employment in applying remedies when I can. The unfinished business of the Maritime and Secret Committees I intend to confine myself to, but I hear so many complaints and see so much confusion from other quarters, that I am obliged to advise in things not committed to me. Much money is wanted. The Militia is at last turning out. There was the greatest scene of confusion in the management of the Continental horses, wagons and expresses that was ever exhibited. Bad enough before Congress departed, it is ten times worse now, and Jacob Hittzeimer, a very honest man, will run mad soon if not properly assisted.

The "much money" was sent on to Washington in packages of hard coin from Morris's own coffers, and in this and in every other imaginable way he labored with indefatigable energy and unruffled optimism over his task. It must have been a dreary enough time for every member of the Patriot party, and Philadelphia sadly changed from the abode of "quiet peace and elegant hospitality" which Adams had found it during

those inspiring early sessions of Congress. The city was half empty, inhabited only by the neutral Quakers in their neutral-tinted garb, its gloomy streets disturbed occasionally by the arrival of wagon-loads of wounded Hessians and the pale ranks of those wretched American prisoners discharged at last from Howe's prison ships in New York Bay and sent to the "Bettering Houses" for their long convalescence.

Panic-stricken and disorganized, the fugitive members of Congress decided to give unlimited control to the few men who had demonstrated their willingness and capacity to assume responsibility in their various departments. They invested Washington with the powers of a dictator, made Morris administrative head of Philadelphia, and intended by the unlimited orders given to Paul Jones to make him the virtual commander-in-chief of the navy. So far had this nameless Scotchman advanced in the councils of America. He had well merited the honor. If Morris, out of his full coffers, had subsidized the penniless government and clothed the army of Washington, Jones, from his little fortune, had paid off the crews of his ships and lent the remainder of his available funds to the government. If Washington, realizing the only method of warfare possible to his wretched handful of troops, had by his masterly retreats and delays gained the title of the American Fabius, Paul Jones, with equal wisdom and a like courage in desperate emergencies, had proposed and carried out the only method of naval warfare possible to the marine forces of the colonists. By rapid descents upon the unprotected coasts of the enemy

with his fast-sailing little ships, he won in his brilliant cruises the only victories possible over the maritime forces of England.

When he came to Philadelphia in the spring of this unhappy year he found himself in the centre of a conflicting atmosphere of praise and blame—friends who wished to put him at the head of the fleet, and foes who had disgraced him by the insult of his glaringly unjust supersedure. The emotions aroused by such extraordinary contrasts in the manner and degree of his recognition might easily have bewildered an older man and a native American. He tried with evident modesty and a controlling fidelity to the common cause to find his way among these warring elements. He waited on Hancock, he visited Morris, he appeared before the marine committee, who were once more returned to Philadelphia with the returning members of Congress. The scattered elements of the government were once more coalescing at its seat, and on the 27th of February were again assembled in Philadelphia with various absentee members still to be heard from. Hancock had by this time journeyed back from Boston and wrote immediately, on the 10th of March, for his wife, telling her that Mrs. Washington had already arrived. Adams sent also for his Portia, and Mrs. Morris, returning also, opened her house on Front Street, and the little Republican Court was again assembled.

Hope dawned again as the spring days arrived, and no further overwhelming disaster came to keep the pleasure-loving Philadelphians from their racing, their

card-playing, and their truly magnificent feasts. It is strange to read that when dark days came again to the patriot cause, in the winter of 1778, when the enemy was really in possession of the capital and Washington was grimly standing guard at Valley Forge, that a wild reign of extravagance and even immorality ran its strange course in Philadelphia. All distinction and party feelings were submerged in the friendly relations which existed between the British soldiers and the colonial dames of that city. A curious condition of affairs obtained which well might have aroused the indignation of Washington. Hundreds of pounds were spent nightly for suppers and dances where both Tory and Whig ladies mingled gayly with the enemies of their country. It is not to be imagined that Paul Jones, elegant as he afterward became in his dress and manners after he had won his laurels in European waters and his sword at the court of Versailles, was part of the aristocratic circle of Philadelphia during the brief period of his visit there in the spring of 1777. Social ambition became later a part of his life in a way both marked and undeniable, but at this moment he was far more soldier than courtier, and was wholly absorbed in the strenuous business of the hour. His own personal grievances did not at this time rise to the surface or become the supreme preoccupation of his mind. He placed himself and his services without reserve or complaint at the disposition of the marine committee.

That Congress should have been unable to prevent the ignoble jealousy of the disgraced commander-in-

chief of the navy, or circumvent its effect in regard to Jones, was a calamity the extent of which is hard to estimate. What his genius and courage might have accomplished at this critical time, had it been given full opportunity, can never be calculated. The manner in which he carried out his instructions, and the no less astounding results he accomplished with the inadequate means at his command, cause never-ending regret for the great plans which were conceived in his brain and laid unavailingly before a vacillating and impotent government. If Lee's treacherous scheming and the Conway cabal had dethroned Washington from his place at the head of the Revolutionary army, the tale of America's struggle for independence might have been strangely altered. Yet a naval genius of the first order was kept from the command of the maritime forces of the nation, and at the most critical period of its existence.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FOUNDING OF THE NAVY

IN the first volume of a work by A. C. Buell, entitled "Paul Jones, Founder of the American Navy," the author prints a long document, attributed to the pen of Jones, containing an elaborate plan in regard to the establishment and regulation of the navy. This document has gained the widest currency and has been generally accepted as authentic. High authorities have declared it to be the "moral and intellectual charter of Annapolis," and have stated that Jones's glorious reputation rests upon this enduring foundation rather than upon the memory of his immortal battles. With the exception of one brief and garbled passage taken from the letter of Jones to Hewes of April 14, 1776, this document is a fabrication as remarkable for its skill as for its well-nigh universal acceptance. Mr. Buell asserts that it was written at the request of the "first marine committee," which assembled on June the 14th, 1775. The account of the formation of the committee which was actually appointed by Congress, as given in the fifth chapter of this volume, is based upon the official records in Washington. These records absolutely disprove the statements of Buell. Internal evidences are also present in the alleged



document which discredit its authenticity in every particular. It has, however, been so frequently quoted as the foundation of Jones's right to be called the "Founder of the American Navy" that it is important at this point in his history to assemble his actual writings in regard to the establishment of the marine.

In the four years of his service in the navy of the Revolution he gave repeated and brilliant examples of his theory of the kind of naval warfare best adapted to the forces of the colonies. Although he entered upon his duties with becoming modesty, he soon discovered that he was the only officer in the service who was capable of formulating effective plans for the improvement of the navy. He immediately began to shape his ideas into practical suggestions calculated to bring order out of the utterly chaotic conditions which existed in the government at Philadelphia and which were ludicrously exemplified by the entirely inefficient commander of the fleet. His knowledge of the rules and standards of the British navy was brought to bear with a proper regard for the differing conditions in the colonies. His long experience in the merchant service and as a commander of armed vessels in the slave-trade had given him an extensive and practical knowledge of seamanship which also assisted him in his conclusions. These suggestions were distinguished by notable common-sense, and showed a cool and discriminating judgment, remarkable foresight, and a grasp, both wide and accurate, of the great subject and of the greater enterprise in which he was engaged.

Following the legislation which established a naval

committee and resolved upon the organization of a national maritime force, Congress, on November the 2d, voted one hundred thousand dollars for the purchase of four ships, and empowered the naval committee to engage officers and seamen, fixing their "encouragement" at one-half of all ships of war made prizes by them and one-third of all transport vessels. On the 10th Congress ordered the organization of a marine corps, and on the 23d a draft of rules for the organization of the American navy and articles to be signed by the officers and seamen was drawn up by John Adams and laid before Congress, which forthwith adopted them after discussion of the several articles. A penal code and a regulation for the establishment of courts-martial were also adopted, as well as regulations for the rations of seamen and the conduct of religious services. Only two grades of commissioned officers were adopted, a captain and a lieutenant, and five marine officers, the highest of which was a captain. The minor officers were master, master's mate, boatswain, boatswain's first and second mate, gunner, gunner's mate, carpenter, carpenter's mate, cooper, captain's clerk, steward, and chaplain. A pay-table and contract of enlistment were also decreed. These rules were adopted in an abridged form from the British naval statutes in force in 1775. These, in brief, were the regulations of the navy when Jones was given his commission. When he was serving as lieutenant on the *Alfred*, in the first cruise of the fleet under Hopkins, and later when he was in command of the *Providence*, he communicated a record of his acts and his comments upon the conduct of affairs by his superior

officers to Joseph Hewes. In September of that year (1776), after the naval committee had given place to the larger marine committee or marine board, he began a correspondence with Robert Morris, who had become a member of that body and was its vice-president and actual head. Morris was also at this time the secretary of the treasury, and by virtue of the large fortune which he put at the disposition of the well-nigh penniless government was not only the secretary of the treasury but the treasury itself. Hewes had informed Jones that Morris had issued, at his suggestion and for Jones's particular "honor and advantage," the orders for his first independent cruise on the *Providence*. Jones soon after addressed Morris in a letter which is the first of a series in which he presented to the head of the marine committee his ideas in regard to the improvement of the regulations in the navy. Although Jones's relation with Morris was begun and largely carried on in letters, and never characterized by the intimacy which he enjoyed with Joseph Hewes, Morris was very quick to recognize the brilliant gifts and accomplishments of his correspondent and ably advocated his advancement at every opportunity. Jones naturally considered a friendship with this all-powerful man to be of the utmost importance, and characteristically made a voluntary reference to the killing of the mutineer in Tobago, desiring that that friendship should be marred by no reserve of confidence or failure in frankness.

The first letter is written from the *Providence*, at sea, a few weeks after Hopkins had assigned him to that command:

*Providence, At Sea, September 4th, 1776.*

*To the HONORABLE ROBERT MORRIS.*

*Honored Sir :—*

I herewith enclose for your inspection all the letters and papers which I found in the brigantine *Sea Nymph*. For the particulars of the cruise hitherto I must beg leave to refer you to the within open letter to the Marine Board, which please to lay before them. I purpose to stand to the southward in the hopes of falling in with some ships which I understand are now on their passage from Barbadoes. But at this late date my success is very uncertain. I will however ply about in this meridian as long as I think I have any chance, and if I fail at last I can run to the northward and try for better success among the fishermen which (I will) may answer no bad purpose by increasing the number of our seamen. However my cruise may terminate, I forget not the singular obligation I owe to Mr. Morris who promised it for my honor and advantage. And I esteem the honor done me by his accepting my correspondence as the (most) greatest favor I could have aspired to. I conclude that Mr. Hewes had acquainted you with a very great misfortune which befell me some years ago, and which brought me into North America. (The best man may soon become equally or far more unfortunate, therefore I will spare you the pain of repeating it here.) I am under no concern whatever that this or any past circumstances of my life will sink me in your opinion. Since (human foresight) human Wisdom cannot secure us from accidents, it is the greatest effort of (Human) reason to bear them all. I will from time to time carefully communicate to you every intelligence in my power, and as the regulations of the Navy are of the utmost consequence, you will not think it presumptuous if with the utmost diffidence I venture to communicate to you such hints as in my humble

opinion will (appear wise) promote its Honor and the good of the Government. I could heartily wish that every Commission Officer were to be previously examined for to my certain knowledge, there are persons who have already crept into Commission without abilities or fit qualifications. I am myself far from desiring to be excused through (my) experience in ours, as well as from my former intimacy with many officers of note in the British Navy, I am convinced that the parity of rank between sea and land or marine officers is of more consequence to the harmony of the service than has generally been imagined. In the British Establishment an Admiral ranks with a General, a Vice-Admiral with a Lieutenant-General, a Rear Admiral with a Major-General, a Commodore with a Brigadier General, a Captain with a Colonel, a Master and Commander with a Lieutenant Colonel; a Lieutenant commanding with a Major, and a Lieutenant in the Navy ranks with a Captain of Horse Marines. I propose not our Enemies as example for general imitation, yet as their navy is the best regulated of any in the world, we must in some degree imitate them and aim at such further improvement as may one day make ours vie with and exceed theirs. Were that regulation to take place in our Navy it would prevent numberless disputes and duellings which otherwise would be unavoidable; besides Sir, you know very well that Marine officers being utterly unacquainted with maritime affairs, are in those cases unfit persons to preside at or compose half the number of a court martial. I beg pardon for this liberty. I thought that such hints might escape your memory in the multiplicity of business. I have always understood the sentence of a Court Martial when confirmed by a Commander in Chief was definite and admitted of no appeal. To prove this I must again recur to English authority. In the case of Lord George Sack-

ville who for disobeying the orders of Prince Ferdinand at the battle of Minden was broke by a Court (Martial) Martial held at the horse Guards, and rendered incapable of serving afterwards in any military capacity, although his great abilities were then well known and are generally acknowledged at this day. I am led into this subject by hearing with astonishment the application and complaint of the late Captain Hazard to the Marine Board after he had been found unworthy of bearing his commission in the Navy by the undivided voice of a court Martial where I had the honor to sit as a member. If he was then unworthy of bearing his commission I cannot see what new merit he can have acquired, and even if he had merit it would not be sound policy to reverse the sentence; it would make officers stand less in awe and attend less punctually to their duty, and it is not improbable that it might induce future Court Martials in some cases to inflict personal punishment from whence there is no appeal. There was a mistake made in the date of my commission which unless you stand my friend will make a material difference when the Navy rank is settled. I took command here the 10th of May, as appears on the order and appointment of the Commander-in-Chief as the back of my commission as eldest lieutenant of the fleet, and my commission as captain is not dated until the eighth day of August, which you know is not fair, as it would subject me to be superseded by Captain Robinson who was at first my junior officer by six— Perhaps it might subject me to be superseded by others. If I have deserved so ill as to be superseded, I am unworthy of bearing my commission (I have been held in some estimation among my fellow mortals) I esteem it a greater disgrace and severer punishment than (it would) to be fairly broke and dismissed the service. I have or-

dered Mr. Chapkins the prize master to deliver you a turtle, which please to accept. I have the honor to be, with grateful esteem and much respect,

Honored Sir,

Your very obliged and very obedient humble servant,  
J. P. J.

This letter is printed from the original autograph draft in the collection of Jones's MSS. at Washington, and shows in the number of corrections and interlineations the degree of care he expended upon it. In a later letter to Morris, he makes further suggestions in regard to the necessity of remodelling the rules of conducting a court-martial after the customs prevailing in the British service. "Seamen should be registered and made subject to three years time, or for as long a time as possible—I wish also that our manner of Courts Martial were as I have known them in England—No Marine Officers were entitled to assist, except where their men were concerned, and that too where they had been on duty *as Soldiers* on the land, that Senior Captains, where there is no Admiral, should be authorized to summon Courts Martial and that whenever Five or more Captains are present no Lieutenant should be authorized to assist. These are only my private sentiments."<sup>1</sup>

Six weeks after the date of this letter, when Jones had successfully completed his first cruise and was again at anchor in Newport harbor, with opportuni-

<sup>1</sup> A fragment of a letter of December 11, 1777, in Jones's handwriting and bearing the address "to the Honbl Robert Morris," also in his handwriting. The date and the name of Jones as the writer is added under the address in another hand. This fragment, pasted into a copy of Sand's "Life of John Paul Jones," is in the possession of the author.

ties to view the conditions prevailing in the fleet, he wrote again to Morris. This letter is in matter as well as manner the most notable of the series. Lucid, earnest, and unaffected, he here reaches his highest point of expression and attains that style of "pure and strenuous eloquence" praised by Disraeli in the life which the great Englishman wrote in defence of our naval hero. Inspired with the noblest enthusiasm for the cause of human liberty, seriously and unselfishly aware of his own unusual responsibilities in the struggle of his adopted country, he here shows those qualities revealed only by the truly great in the momentous crises of human history:

*Providence Sloop of War at NEWPORT  
RHODE ISLAND, 17th October 1776.*

HONORED SIR:—

I wrote you at sea the 4th ult. of the brigantine *Sea Nymph* second prize. I have taken sixteen sail, manned and sent in eight prizes, and sunk burnt and destroyed the rest. The list of prizes is as follows:—

1—The Brigantine <i>Britania</i> —whaler	} manned and sent in
2 “ “ <i>Sea Nymph</i> , West Indies	
3— “ “ <i>Favorite</i>	
4. The Ship <i>Alexander</i> , New Foundland	
5—The Brigantine <i>Success</i>	
6— “ “ <i>Kingston Packet</i> , Jamaica	
7— “ “ <i>Defiance</i> , Jersey	
8 Sloop <i>Portland</i> —whaler	
<hr/>	
1—The Ship <i>Adventure</i> , Jersey	} Burnt or other- wise destroyed.
2—The Brigantine <i>Friendship</i>	
3—The Schooner <i>John</i> , London	
4. —The Schooner <i>Sea Flower</i> —Canso	
5. — “ “ <i>Ebenezer</i> , Canso	
6—The Schooner <i>Hope</i> , Jersey	



I have written from time to time to the Marine Board and furnished them with a particular account of my proceedings, and I now send copies of my former letters. I arrived here 7th instant. I would not have lost a day without writing you and to the Board had not the Commodore proposed to me to take command of an expedition with the *Alfred*, *Providence* and *Hampden*, to destroy the fisheries of New Foundland, but principally to relieve a hundred of the fellow citizens who are detained as prisoners and slaves in the coal pits of Cape Breton. All my humanity was awakened and called up to action by the laudable proposal, and I have been successfully employed in refitting and getting the *Providence* in readiness, but am under the greatest apprehension that the expedition will fall to nothing as the *Alfred* is greatly short of men, and we have with much ado enlisted thirty more; but it seems the privateers entice them away as fast as they receive their months pay. It is to the last degree distressing to contemplate the state and establishment of our navy. The common class of men are actuated by no nobler principles than that of self interest; this, and this alone determines all adventures in privateers, the owners as well as those whom they employ. And while this is the case, unless the private emoluments of individuals in our Navy is made superior to that in Privateers, it never can become respectable. And without a respectable Navy—alas! America! In the present critical state of affairs, human wisdom can suggest no more than one infallible expedient; enlist the seamen during pleasure and give them all the prizes. What is the paltry emolument of two-thirds of prizes to the finances of this vast continent! If so poor a resource is essential to its independency, in sober sadness we are involved in a woeful predicament, and our ruin is fast approaching.

The situation of America is new in the annals of mankind; her affairs cry, haste and speed must answer them. Trifles, therefore, ought to be wholly disregarded, as being in the old vulgar phrase "penny wise and pound foolish." If our enemies with the best established and most formidable Navy in the universe have found it expedient to assign all prizes to the captors, how much more is such policy essential to our infant fleet; but I need use no arguments to convince you of the necessity of making the emolument of our Navy equal if not superior to theirs. We have had proof that a Navy may be officered almost on any terms, but we are not so sure that these officers are equal to their commissions; nor will the Congress ever obtain such certainty until they, in their wisdom, see proper to appoint a Board of Admiralty, competent to determine impartially the respective merits and abilities of their officers, and to superintend, regulate and point out all the motions and operations of the Navy. Gov. Hopkins tells me that he apprehends I am appointed to the *Andrew Doria*; she is a good cruiser and would in my judgment answer much better were she mounted with twelve six-pounders than as she is at present with fourteen fours. An expedition of importance may be expected this winter on the coast of Africa with part of the original fleet. Either the *Alfred* or *Columbus* with the *Andrew Doria* and *Providence* would, I am persuaded, carry all before them, and give a blow to the English African trade which would not be soon recovered, by not leaving them a mast standing on that coast. This expedition would be attended with no great expense; besides the ships and vessels mentioned are unfit for service in a winter coast, which is not the case with the new frigates. The small squadron for this service ought to sail early, that the prizes may reach our ports in March or April.

If I do not succeed in manning the *Alfred* so as to proceed to the eastward in the course of this week, the season will be lost; the cod fleet will be gone to Halifax, and the fishermen to Europe. I will not, however, remain inactive, but proceed to cruise in the sloop near Sandy Hook. Three of my prizes have arrived here and one or two to the eastward.

I am and so forth.

J. P. J.

Ten days after writing this letter he set forth on his second northern cruise, but before departing he sent, on October 31, an intimate letter to his friend Hewes, deploring the unorganized condition of the navy and saying that he had "waited long and impatiently for the production of some abler pen, but was now no better satisfied than at the beginning." He urged again the necessity of establishing an "impartial Board of Admiralty competent to determine the merits and abilities of every officer and to superintend regulate and direct every out fit and operation of the Marine forces which would soon give firmness and stability to our fleet and make it formidable even to Great Britain." He continued his communications to his friend Morris in a series of official reports to the marine committee, which were addressed primarily to Morris as its chairman and thereafter communicated to the other members. After his return to Boston, on the 12th of January, he sent a private letter to Morris, criticising very sharply the blundering regulations which were still in force in regard to the distribution of prize-money through the fleet.

BOSTON *Jan 12th.* 1777

HONORED SIR.

I am happy in this opportunity of thanking you for the kind and favourable mention which Mr. Livingston informs me you have made of my former letters. Should Mr. H. be at present absent from Congress, I must beg you to look over the Inclosed letters for him before you forward them. Should the expedition Spoke of in my last to you be put in execution—as it may take up eight months or upwards, and as the Season is now so far advanced, it will be most advisable to Set out early in the Spring so that the Prizes may reach the Continent in the beginning of the ensuing Winter. I need not observe to you that Secrecy is Above all things to be attended to in every expedition. None beside the Principle in Command ought to be made acquainted with the plan or destination. The bounty offered by the Artillery who are enlisted here being from 26 to 36 pounds lawful money for three years' Service induces all the Seamen to Enter. The Seamen have been Very ill used and the Navy hath been much hurted by the Cursed (?) Association for the Joint Share of Prize Money thro' the Fleet whither present at the Capture or Absent. The Gentry who set that Agreement on Foot and who carried it thro' the Fleet at Rudy Island have take Care to keep out of harm's way themselves ever since our Grand Affair with the *Glasgow*. Nay, one of those Arch Patriots, when ordered to Philadelphia, told the Commodore, who repeated it to me, that if the other two were willing himself would agree to be Broke if the Congress would Allow them half pay. The same Gentleman kept his Ship Eight months in Providence River and then left her with a Fished Main Mast and only one Common Pump that would work. But we surely can never have a Navy under good discipline

or well Manned Until Some effectual expedient is Adopted to induce the Seamen to enter of an unlimited time. Perhaps it might answer if the Seamen in America were Numbered and formed into a certain Number of Classes Subject to Serve in their turns—but the most infallible method is to give them All they Take. I will add Something more as I shall have Another Opportunity in a day or two.

I have the Honor to be with Grateful Esteem and Respect,

Sir,

Your truly obliged

Very Humble Servant,

J. P. J.

The Honble. R. M.

N. B.—If you please to look over the inclosed copy of my letter to the Council here, and of their Answer or rather Order to me, you will see the treatment which I have had from that House. I wish to know whither they Ought or Ought not to Assume Authority over the Navy,

Endorsed: Copy of a letter to the  
Honble. R. Morris, Esqr.  
by Express from Council.

Four days after this letter he wrote again to Morris, enlarging upon the manifest injustice and unfortunate results of the prize-money regulation, and expressing the greatest sympathy for the pitiable condition of the seamen:

BOSTON, *Jany.* 16, 1777.

HONORED SIR:—

As I am not well assured of your having received my first letter in the *Providence*—I have taken the

liberty of inclosing a Copy.—I must here asurt that it is both unjust and inimical to the interest of the service that any person or persons belonging to the Navy should share in prizes when they were themselves absent and out of harms way when the Capture was made. By this Unprecedented association, which was effected by Fellows who have consulted their Personal safety ever since, the Navy hath received more real injury than the sum total of all the benefit which hath accrued from their past, or which is likely to accrue from their future services—for prize-money is thereby become so very intricate and perplexed that the greatest part of the seamen desisted immediately after their return from New Providence, and those poor fellows who have faithfully served the term of their Enlistment are deterred from re-Entering as they have not rec'd., nor is there any prospect of their receiving a Shilling of Prize Money—so that it makes my heart Bleed to see them half Naked at this Severe Season.—Such an association was never known to be binding for more than a Single cruize, therefore in the present Case it is highly requisite that it should be set aside and some happy expedient fallen upon to induce the Seamen to enter cheerfully into the Service *for an Unlimited Time*.

I did not till a few minutes ago hear of this Opportunity by Mr. Cumberland Dougall of Baltimore and as he is to set out immediately I am obliged to curtail my letter otherwise I had considerably more to add.

I Inclose in this Packet a Copy of my letter lately forwarded to the Marine Board with an Estimate of the Expence of Altering the *Alfred*—But I must repeat my Opinion that She is now much better calculated for the Merchant Service than she can be made for War and as She is calculated for Stowing Tobacco She would make a good remittance to France.—My prize

the *Mellish* Transport, as she was lately a Bomb in the English Service, would make a better Ship of War than the *Alfred*. From the bins downward She is one Solid Bed of Timber. She sails as well as the *Alfred* and is not near So Crank, so that her lee Guns would be servicable when the *Alfred's* will not.—I understand that there is a Quantity of Nine Pounders to spare at New London, and the *Mellish* would Mount 18 or 20 on one Deck. The *Alfred's* Guns are of such a Variety of lengths and Sizes that it is both difficult and dangerous to Fight them, and the Nine Pounders are all too long for Sea Service. Should you resolve to convert the *Mellish* into a Ship of War I believe she may be fitted better here than at Dartmouth where she now is.—I will esteem the honor of hearing from you as soon as may be convenient—and it will Always give me pleasure to receive and Obey your Commands.—I understand by the report of Captain Falconer that I was Appointed to one of the Ships at Philadelphia—and Mr. Livingston is also of that Opinion. Perhaps they have been mistaken.—However I submit my appointment as well as my Rank and destination entirely to you—as I am well assured that if I have any Merit or Abilities they will not be Overlooked or Superseded—I have the honor to be with Grateful Esteem and Respect,

Sir,

Your truely Obliged

Very Obedient

and most humble servant,

J. P. J.

On the 21st of January came the unexpected blow of his dismissal from the command of the *Alfred* and his orders to return to the *Providence*. Before Jones's account of this occurrence could have reached Robert

Morris he sent the letter already given to Jones, detailing the plans which he had prepared for his execution, and which were afterward authorized by Congress. That letter, which gave him the command of all the available ships of the fleet, shows to what extent his services had recommended him to the favor of Morris and how largely the marine board shared his opinions. Jones had himself proposed and presented to the marine board a plan for an extensive expedition, comprising a descent upon the British ports and shipping on the coast of Africa. In his letter to Jones, Morris excuses his neglect in replying to this latest proposition on the ground of the confusion and multiplicity of business incident upon the departure of Congress to Baltimore, and omits any reference to Hewes's absence from Congress or to the new list of navy appointments, with its injurious displacement of Jones. In the light of the extraordinary orders he was issuing to Captain Jones this painful occurrence did not command his attention.

Before this most flattering proof of the confidence and appreciation of the controlling member of the marine committee had time to reach Jones in Boston, the latter wrote again to Morris a letter which shows how actively he was engaged in a study of the deplorable conditions then existing in the navy. It shows also that the suggestions of his brother officers did not command his admiration. His remarks about Hopkins, although severe, expressed a contempt and resentment unfortunately only too natural and deserved.

<sup>1</sup> See page 137.



BOSTON, *Feby.* 10th, 1777.

HONORED SIR:

Enclosed I send a Copy of my last letter to the Marine Board—Also Copies of my letters to you since my Arrival here in the *Alfred*.—As the good government of the Navy is of the greatest importance, it is a duty incumbent on every Man who is honored with a Commission in the Service to contribute all within his power to so Valuable an End. You will not therefore, I am persuaded, charge me with disrespect Altho' my free Sentiments may not Perhaps, always correspond with your own.—It would give me much more pleasure could I Join with the other Commanders in Pointing out hints for Useful Rules and Regulations—We have had Sundry Meetings here for this purpose without being able to Effect any thing—And as this is a natural consequence where the understanding is contracted I have determined that if I subscribe to Nonsense it shall be Nonsense of my own not that of others!

There are no Officers more immediately wanted in the marine department than Commissioners of Dock Yards to Superintend the Building and Outfit of all Ships of war—With power to Appoint Deputies to provide and have in constant Readiness Sufficient Quantities of Provision Stores, Hops, Etc., So that the Small number of Ships we have May constantly be employed and not Continue Idle as they do at present—Besides all the Advantages that would arise from such Appointments, the saving which would accrue to the Continent is worth attending to; had such men been appointed at the first the new Ships might have been at Sea long Ago.—The difficulty now lays in finding Men who are deserving and who are fitly qualified for an Office of such Importance.

Captain Thomson of the *Raleigh* Frigate in my Opinion Understands the Business in all its branches he Seems a Merchant, a Man of the world, a Gentle-

man—and the construction and equipment of the *Raleigh* by his particular Advice does honor to his Mechanical turn and is Evident proof of his judgment so that everything might be expected from his Sagacity and forethought—And from what I have heard him express, I believe he would Undertake to Superintend the Building and Equipment of the Ships lately Ordered.—

The Navy is in a wretched Condition.—It wants a man of Abilities at its head who could bring on a Purgation and Distinguish between the Abilities of a Gentleman and those of a mere Sailor or Boatswains Mate, for till such distinction is made the Navy will never become Respectable.—A man who hath the Meanness of Soul *to Deny his word* is a Despicable being Indeed! he sinks beneath the Condition of the poorest Reptile that Crawls on the Earth—And it is not Uncharitable to Suspect him as being Capable of any Baseness Whatever.—As the Action brought against me for taking Men out of the *Eagle* Privateer where I found deserters from the Navy is a Matter which nearly concerns America as well as myself.—I will add a Paragraph from a Letter which I lately received from Colonel Tillinghast of Providence, as follows:—

“The Commodore has just left me of whom I requested to know his determination either to disavow his orders to you or to commend your conduct that I might acquaint you thereof Agreeable to your desire, to which he replies: ‘You have his Orders in Writing which, if that will Justify your Conduct it’s well.’” now Sir, I have proof that he both Sent and gave me from his own mouth express Orders to take all the Seamen out of Privateers where I found a Deserter from the Navy.—But this is not the first Slip he hath made for I have frequently heard him Affirm that *he served America without Pay*.—if so, why is he so earnest about

claiming a Twentieth part of all prizes? This leads to an Enquiry whether that Claim be well or ill founded for it would be Absurd to Suppose that the Congress mean to give him Such a Regard for Smoking his pipe at home—it being altogether Unprecedented in a Navy Establishment even in Countries where other Sinecures and Abuses are Common.—When the Commander of a Fleet or Squadron goes to Sea in Person or is on a Foreign Situation the Case is very Different.”

You cannot at such distance imagine the discontent which prevails among the Seamen in these Eastern States on Account of Prize Money—They stand aloof and will not re-enter until that Matter is Settled—and there is no prospect of its ever being Settled while Individuals lay Claim to Shares, who were not present at the Captures—Lawsuits, Duellings, and endless Animosities will be the consequence and the Publick Service will be Neglected and at a Stand while this dispute Subsists—As it is a direct Violation of a Resolve of Congress that any person whatever other than the Captors should share in Prizes. An Explanatory Resolve is the Most Speedy and Effectual Method to put an End to the Controversy and restore harmony to the Service.—No man or private Society of men hath a Right to add to the established laws of the land Yet by the Inclosed Invitation we see that Individuals in the Navy have Assumed that Authority.

I must repeat what I asserted formerly that unless some happy expedient can be fallen upon to induce the Seamen to Enter into the Service for a longer term than Twelve Months it will never be possible to bring them under proper Subordination, and Subordination is as necessary, Nay, far more so in the Fleet than in the Army. Present Advantages tho’ small will Operate far more on the minds of Seamen than Future Prospects tho’ great.—they ought at least to enter during

the war—if not during pleasure—And all Deserters ought to be Capitally punished. Instead of this there hath not been a Single Instance of Inflicting punishment on a Deserter, but on the contrary they have even been paid for the time of their Absence.—And they are Suffer'd to parade thro' the Country with impunity without being Questioned.—Were these matters rectified we should hear of no such thing as Desertion. The American Navy would soon become respectable to all the World, Gentlemen of Parts and liberal minds would Join it from all Quarters and Felicity would lend us her Standard. I shall only add at present that the Navy would be far better without a Head than with a Bad One.—I have the honor to be with the greatest deference and Esteem

Sir      Your very Obliged  
                  very Obedient  
                  Most humble Servant  
                                  J. P. J.

(Indorsement)

Boston *Feb'y 10th*, 1777

Copy of a letter to the  
 Honble. R. M.—

The next document in the series dealing with naval affairs is dated the 7th of April, in Philadelphia, while he was waiting for his new command. In the so-called "Refreshing Memorial" from the Texel, a very lucid and comprehensive narrative of his various services, which was drawn up by Jones in the year 1779 to be presented to Congress, he says: "The President of Congress told me that as the regulation of the Marine was then under consideration, it would be of service if I could give in writing the outlines of my ideas on a

Navy system. This I did with great pleasure, and the adoption of my ideas by the navy board at Boston, together with some other regulations nearly corresponding with my essay took place soon after." This document, drawn up in a condensed form in accordance with Hancock's request for the "outlines" of his ideas, contained the nucleus of a properly organized marine establishment. The suggestions therein contained were very creditable to the discriminating judgment and practical good sense of the young naval officer of little more than a year's standing, and show no little degree of prophetic vision in regard to the growth of the country and the future needs of its navy.

A PLAN FOR THE REGULATION AND EQUIPMENT OF THE  
NAVY DRAWN UP AT THE REQUEST OF THE HON-  
ORABLE THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Let a Dockyard be established at the most convenient and defensible Port, within the four Eastern States, let another be established at the proper place within the five middle States, and a third at a proper place within the four Southern States, let the Navy be formed into three divisions one Squadron to Rendezvous at each dockyard. Let a principal Commissioner, a Surveyor, a Treasurer, and Deputies if necessary, with Clerks, and Storekeepers &c be appointed for each Dockyard. Let it be the duty of the Commissioners to superintend the Building, Repair, alteration, Victualling, payment and outfit of all Ships of War, let it be their duty to Provide and have in constant readiness sufficient Quantities of Provision, Anchors, Cables, Masts, Yards, Sails, Rigging, Warlike and Naval Stores, Slops and all manner of Articles which are necessary

for the speedy Equipment of Ships of War, let it be their duty to examine Warrant Officers and to recommend them to the Board of Admiralty, let it also be their duty to inspect into the State and condition of each Ship as soon as she arrives in Port and to call the Warrant officers to account for the Expenditure of the Stores in their respective departments; these Officers ought to make good all Wastage or Embezzlement.

Let it be the duty of any Continental Agent to import such articles as the Commissioners may direct for the use of their Navy, let it be their duty to supply Ships of War when in Ports at a distance from the dockyards with such Stores and Articles as may be wanted, to enable the Agent to do this with convenience and despatch, let them have in constant readiness at some of the best outports certain Quantities of such Articles as the Commissioners may judge necessary, let it also be the duty of any Agents to muster the Ships company when in Port, and to make return to the Commissioner on Oath.

Let all Commissioners meet at Philadelphia and hold a general Conference once a year, leaving deputies or clerks, to carry on the Business in their absence, let it be their duty to settle all accounts, with the Board of Admiralty, or such Person or Persons as the Board shall think fit to appoint to whom they are always to be accountable for every part of their Conduct; let it be their duty to lay before the Board, or whom the Board may appoint, the true state and condition of each Ship, of each Dockyard and of all Stores, to point out past errors and future Improvements in the construction of Ships, Drydocks, Hulks, &c, to suggest necessary institutions in the Marine department and to furnish hints to form a clear line of duty for each of the Navy warrant Officers.

The principal commissioner ought to be a steady

Man of Business, a Seaman and complete Mechanic, well skilled in all respects in the construction and equipment of Ships of War; it will naturally be his duty to inspect the Conduct of the Surveyor and Treasurer.

The Surveyor ought to be a Shipwright, a Man of great activity, and of sound Judgment, well acquainted with the Qualities and Properties of Ships of War, as well as (with) all their materials and stores.

The Treasurer ought to be a man of Business, and a complete Merchant. The purchase of provision and of slops &c. as well as the payment of the men might fall under his direction. The Authority of the Commissioners must by no means extend to the destination of Ships or their internal Government, it being their Province only to keep the navy in fit order for sea service and it being the Province of Commanders in the Navy to govern their Ships according to the Rules and Regulations established by the Supreme Power of Congress, and to follow the Instructions which they may Receive from the Board of Admiralty, or their deputies, or from Senior or Flag Officers, consequently Commanders of Squadrons or of Single Ships have a right to call on the Commissioners or Agents for supplies whenever they are in want of them, being always accountable to Senior Officers in their division for their conduct, but more especially so to the Board of Admiralty.

As the extent of the Continent is so great that the most advantageous Enterprise may be lost before Orders can arrive within the Eastern and Southern districts from the Board of Admiralty it will perhaps be expedient to appoint deputies for executing the Office of HIGH ADMIRAL within these extreme districts, to continue in office only during Pleasure and at all times accountable to the Board of Admiralty. Perhaps one deputy to the Eastward and another to the Southward may be found equal to the Business, but the number

in each department ought not to exceed three. They ought to be Men of inviolable Secrecy, who inherit much discernment and sagacity, and are endowed with consummate knowledge in Marine Affairs. Besides pointing out the duty of the deputies with the assistance of three or more of the most judicious Commanders of the Fleet who may be named by the Board of Admiralty to examine the abilities of men who apply for commissions and make report to the Board; also to examine divers Persons who now bear Commissions in the Service, and whose Abilities and Accomplishments are very suspicious and uncertain. The board may do the same within the middle district, and by this means the Navy will, at a Period not far distant be Officered by Gentlemen and Men of Sense, instead of (by) Men of no education, with limited capacities, whom Nature never intended for a Rank superior to that of BOATSWAIN.

It may also be expedient to establish an Academy at each Dockyard under proper Masters, who's duty it should be to instruct the officers of the Fleet when in Port in the Principles and application of the mathematics, Drawing, Fencing and other manly Arts and Accomplishments.

It will be requisite that young Men serve a certain term in Quality of Midshipmen, or Masters mate before they are examined for promotion.

And the necessity of Establishing an Hospital near each Dockyard, under the care of Skilful Physicians is self evident.

JNO. P. JONES.

PHILADELPHIA *7th April* 1777.

It was long before America had a naval academy or before the higher grades of admiral and rear-admiral which Paul Jones recommended were established, but



several of his suggestions as to the improvement of certain regulations were soon after adopted, to the great and immediate benefit of the service; parity of rank between the army and the navy was shortly after resolved upon on the basis proposed by him, and the very necessary regulation in regard to the award of an increased share of prize-money to the captors of ships taken from the enemy was also adopted. The first regulation silenced the very bitter feeling engendered by the irregular and changing list of navy appointments. The prize-money regulation was equally important in its effect of counteracting the privateering interests, which offered such superior inducements to seamen that they threatened to choke the infant navy at the very moment of its birth; the increase of emolument to the captors, as finally ordered by Congress at the instant request of Paul Jones, made it finally possible to secure seamen for the public service. The appointment of a board of admiralty, the examination of officers before appointment by a regularly constituted committee, the increase in the length of the terms of enlistment, and a properly appointed and regulated court-martial were all adopted according to Jones's suggestions.<sup>1</sup> The only pity, as his naval biographer<sup>2</sup> remarks, being that this adoption was so long delayed.

<sup>1</sup> Parity of rank was recommended by Jones in a letter to Morris of September the 4th, 1776. It was adopted by Congress on November the 15th of this same year.

New prize-money regulations were recommended by Jones on October the 17th, 1776, and adopted on the 30th of the same month.

A board of admiralty was recommended by Jones in a letter to Morris on October the 17th and in later letters to Hewes; it was adopted in October, 1779.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Alexander Slidell McKenzie, "Life of Paul Jones," 1848.

Another and very important communication, written at a later date (after his European experience and his association with officers of the French fleet had widened his knowledge and enlarged his views), completes the series of letters which he addressed to Morris as head of the American marine. This document was prepared in Philadelphia in the year 1783, after peace had been declared, and was written primarily for the purpose of presenting his grievances in the matter of his supersedence in rank, and to urge his claims for reinstatement in what he now considered was his proper place at the head of the navy. It contains many reflections and suggestions in regard to the regulation of the marine, and the portions of it as here quoted were printed by Disraeli in his anonymous life of Jones, with the comment that "they would be found exceedingly interesting, and not merely to our Naval Officers." The advance which they showed in both knowledge and power of expression over the opinions given in the preceding letters is very striking:

The beginning of our navy, as navies now rank, was so singularly small, that, I am of the opinion, it has no precedent in history. Was it a proof of madness in the first corps of sea officers to have, at so critical a period, launched out on the ocean with only two armed merchant ships, two armed brigantines, and one armed sloop, to make war against such a power as Great Britain? To be diffident is not always a proof of ignorance. I had sailed before this revolution in armed ships and frigates, yet, when I came to try my skill, I am not ashamed to own I did not find myself perfect in the duties of a first lieutenant. If midnight study

and the instruction of the greatest and most learned sea officers, can have given me advantages, I am not without them. I confess, however, I have yet to learn; it is the work of many years' study and experience to acquire the high degree of science necessary for a great sea officer. Cruising after merchant ships, the service in which our frigates have usually been employed, affords, as I may say, no part of the knowledge necessary for conducting fleets and their operations. There is now, perhaps, as much difference between a battle between two ships, and an engagement between two fleets, as there is between a duel and a ranged battle between two armies. The English, who boast so much of their navy, never fought a ranged battle on the ocean before the war that is now ended. The battle off Ushant was, on their part, like their former ones, irregular; and Admiral Keppell could only justify himself by the example of Hawke in our remembrance, and of Russel in the last century. From that moment the English were forced to study, and to imitate, the French in their evolutions. They never gained any advantage when they had to do with equal force, and the unfortunate defeat of Count de Grasse was owing more to the unfavorable circumstances of the wind coming a-head four points at the beginning of the battle, which put his fleet in the order of echiquier when it was too late to tack, and of calm and currents afterwards, which brought on an entire disorder, than to the admiralship or even the vast superiority of Rodney, who had forty sail of the line against thirty, and five three-deckers against one. By the account of some of the French officers, Rodney might as well have been asleep, not having made a second signal during the battle, so that every captain did as he pleased.

The English are very deficient in signals, as well as in naval tactic. This I know, having in my possession

their present fighting and sailing instructions, which comprehend all their signals and evolutions. Lord Howe has, indeed, made some improvements by borrowing from the French. But Kempenfelt, who seems to have been a more promising officer, had made a still greater improvement by the same means.

It was said of Kempenfelt, when he was drowned in the *Royal George*, England lost her du Pavillion. That great man, the Chevalier du Pavillion, commanded the *Triumphant*, and was killed in the last battle of Count de Grasse. France lost in him one of her greatest naval tacticians, and a man who had, besides, the honour (in 1773) to invent the new system of naval signals, by which sixteen hundred orders, questions, answers and informations can, without confusion or misconstruction, and with the greatest celerity, be communicated through a great fleet. It was his fixed opinion that a smaller number of signals would be insufficient. A captain of the line at this day must be a tactician. A captain of a cruising frigate may make shift without ever having heard of naval tactics. Until I arrived in France, and became acquainted with that great tactician Count D'Orvilliers, and his judicious assistant the Chevalier du Pavillion, who, each of them honoured me with instructions respecting the science of governing the operations, Etc. of a fleet, I confess I was not sensible how ignorant I had been, before that time, of naval tactics.

From the observations I have made, and what I have read, it is my opinion, that in a navy there ought to be at least as many grades below a captain of a line, as there are below a colonel of a regiment. Even the navy of France is deficient in subaltern grades, and has paid dearly for that error in its constitution, joined to another of equal magnitude, which authorizes ensigns of the navy to take charge of watch on board ships of

the line. One instance may be sufficient to show this. The *Zélé* in the night between the 11th and 12th of April, 1782, ran on board the *Ville de Paris*, which accident was the principal cause of the unfortunate battle which ensued next day, between Count de Grasse and Admiral Rodney. That accident in all probability would not have happened, had the deck of the *Zélé* been at the time commanded by a steady experienced lieutenant of the line, instead of a young ensign. The charge of the deck of a ship of the line should, in my judgment, never be entrusted to an officer under twenty-five years of age. At that time of life he may be supposed to have served nine or ten years, a term not more than sufficient to have furnished him with the necessary knowledge for so great a charge. It is easy to conceive that the minds of the officers must become uneasy, when they are continued too long in any one grade, which must happen (if regard be paid to the good of the service) when there are no more subaltern grades than midshipman and lieutenant. Would it not be wiser to raise young men by smaller steps and to increase the number?

I have many things to offer respecting the formation of our navy, but shall here limit myself to one, which I think a preliminary to the formation and establishment of a naval constitution suitable to the local situation, resources and prejudices of this continent. The constitution adopted for the navy in the year 1775, and by which it has been governed ever since, and crumbled away, I may say, to nothing, is so very defective, that I am of the opinion it would be difficult to spoil it. Much wisdom and more knowledge than we possess, is, in my humble opinion, necessary to the formation of such a naval constitution as is absolutely wanting. If, when our finances enable us to go on, we should set out wrong, as we did in the year 1775, but much more

so after the arrangement or rather derangement of rank in 1776, much money may be thrown away to little or no purpose. We are a young people, and need not be ashamed to ask advice from nations older and more experienced in marine affairs than ourselves. This, I conceive might be done in a manner that would be received as a compliment by several or perhaps all the marine powers of Europe, and at the same time would enable us to collect such helps as would be of vast use when we come to form a constitution for the creation and government of our marine, the establishment and police of our dock-yards, academies, hospitals, etc., etc., and the general police of our seamen throughout the continent. These considerations induced me, on my return from the fleet of his excellency the Marquis de Vaudreuil, to propose to you to lay my ideas on the subject before Congress, and to propose sending a proper person to Europe in a handsome frigate to display our flag in the ports of the different marine powers, to offer them the free use of our ports and propose to them commercial advantages, etc., and then to ask permission to visit their marine arsenals, and to be informed how they are furnished both with men, provision, materials and warlike stores,—by what police and officers they are governed, how and from what resources the officers and men are paid, etc.—the line of conduct drawn between the officers of the fleet, etc.,—also the armament and equipment of the different ships of war, with their dimensions, the number and qualities of their officers and men, by what police they are governed in port and at sea, how and from what resources they are fed, clothed, paid, etc., and the general police of their seamen, academies, hospitals, etc., etc. If you still object to my project on account of the expense of sending a frigate to Europe and keeping her there until the business can be effected,

I think it may be done, though, perhaps, not with the same dignity, without a frigate. My plan for forming a proper corps of sea officers is, by teaching them the naval tactics in a fleet of evolution. To lessen the expense as much as possible, I would compose that fleet of frigates instead of ships of the line, on board of each I would have a little academy, where the officers should be taught the principles of mathematics and mechanics, when off duty. When in port, the young officers should be obliged to attend the academies established at each dock-yard, where they should be taught the principles of every art and science that is necessary to form the character. And every commission officer of the navy should have free access and be entitled to receive instruction gratis at those academies. All this would be attended with no very great expense, and the public advantage resulting from it would be immense. I am sensible it cannot be immediately adopted, and that we must first look about for ways and means; but the sooner it is adopted the better. We cannot, like the ancients, build a fleet in a month, and we ought to take example from what has lately befallen Holland. In time of peace it is necessary to prepare, and be always prepared for war at sea. I have had the honour to be presented with copies of the signals, tactics and police, that have been adopted under the different admirals of France and Spain during the war, and I have in my last campaign seen them put in practice. While I was at Brest, as well as while I was inspecting the building of the *America*, as I had furnished myself with good authors, I applied much of my leisure time to the study of naval architecture, and other matters that related to the establishment and police of dockyards, Etc. I, however, feel myself bound to say again. I have yet much need to be instructed.



A letter written to a brother officer just before the close of the war, at a time when the navy had become practically disorganized, gives an intimate and personal statement of his persistent efforts toward the improvement of the navy:

PORTSMOUTH, *May 25th.* 1782.

TO HECTOR MCNEILL, Boston.

I am honored my dear friend, with your esteemed favor of the 20th. I am altogether in the dark about what has been done or is doing to re-establish the credit of our Marine. In the course of near seven years service I have continually suggested what has occurred to me as most likely to promote its honor and render it servicable to our Cause; but my voice has been like a cry in the Desert: I know no remedy but patience. No man can be more in suspense than I am—and my reason as well as my feelings correspond with yours in lamenting the protraction of Justice to men who have merited the smiles of the Sovereign Authority. Whatever I have written or may write to you on so delicate a subject must be in confidence. I fondly hope the times will mend, and that Merit and Abilities will yet find encouragement; but were I used ever so ill I determine to persevere, till my Country is Free.

When I hear anything farther I shall not fail to write you, meantime present my affectionate respects to your family, and believe me your

PAUL JONES.

A short dissertation on the art of war, which forms the conclusion of his journal of his Russian campaign, is the last composition of his pen in regard to the profession of which he was so illustrious an exponent:



The art of war deserves the exclusive attention of those who are to be engaged in it; and military science is only acquired by dint of study, of reflections and of combinations. This study commenced at an early season, constantly followed up during life, and aided by continued experience, will hardly become familiar in all its parts to him who pursues it. Some occasion will infallibly happen, when pungent regret for having neglected to obtain instruction will be felt in all their force, by him who charged with an important operation, is obliged to confess to himself his own incapacity to execute it. The time has gone by for beginning to attend to such study when he has unfortunately been promoted to a command. Birth, patronage, solicitation, intrigue sometimes win employment and rank; but they do not secure success and credit. As the profession of arms is so honorable, and those who hold commands acquire a reputation at once so brilliant and so solid when they discharge their duties worthily; and as on the other hand nothing is so disgraceful as a repulse received in war, through our own fault; with what ardour should not officers who have any passion for true glory, seek to provide themselves abundantly with all the variety of knowledge, which may some day put them in the way of becoming distinguished?

Courage alone, will not lead to renown, as many fondly believe. The road would be too easy. The fate of courage, devoid of the lights which a knowledge of the principles of the art communicates is to be ignorant of danger to confront it, and to perish to no purpose, often without the satisfaction in perishing of knowing that the manner of its fall was intrepid.

It would appear that the study of an art of which all the details are so interesting, the knowledge of which is connected with an infinite number of facts naturally

exciting quick curiosity the principles of which are scattered through the histories of all nations, must have inspiring attractions for those who desire to rise in their profession as high as they are permitted to hope for and a taste for it which cannot but redound to their advantage by conducting them through the true path to the promotion they covet. Such promotion cannot be flattering to men of sense unless they have the satisfaction of knowing that they deserved it: and that consciousness is in itself sufficient to console those whose success calumniators have made it their business to prevent.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE "RANGER"

On the 25th of March, while Jones was on his way from Boston to Philadelphia, the marine committee, prevented by Hopkins from giving him the important command which they had destined for him, had already taken measures to provide him with a ship:

The Congress by a resolve of the 20th inst, having ordered that the agent in Boston should purchase, arm and fit out for the service of the United States three fast sailing ships that will conveniently mount 18 six pounders on one deck, and that Captain Paul Jones shall command one of said ships, until better provision can be made for him. Therefore Resolved, that Captain Paul Jones shall have his choice of those three ships, and that he superintend the fitting of her out. (Extract from the Minutes of John Brown, in Marine Committee, Philadelphia, March 15th.)

The Agent, Mr. Bradford, has orders from this Committee to purchase and fit out three armed vessels pursuant on a resolve of Congress which is transmitted to him, one of which you are to command, and the Committee have directed that you should have your choice. Therefore you are desired to make your selection as soon as the purchase shall be made, and to superintend

and hasten the fitting of her out for sea with all expedition.

We are, Sir,

Your very humble servants,

JOHN HANCOCK,  
WILLIAM WHIPPLE,  
WILLIAM ELLERY,  
ABRAHAM CLARK,  
THOMAS BANKS,  
ROBERT MORRIS.

After the conclusion of his business in Philadelphia, having left his plan for a navy system in the hands of the marine committee, Jones proceeded to Boston in pursuance of his orders. It is not difficult to imagine the thoughts which must have occupied his mind on his journey back to New England. The affairs of his country were still in the gravest doubt, and his reflections must have taken a serious tone as he made his way through the Jerseys, past farms devastated by the Hessians, and through the half-deserted villages, in that early despondent spring-time of 1777.

Congress had proved sadly ineffectual and was little respected. The treasury was empty and the army depleted by desertions, while everywhere the British arms were victorious. Howe was threatening to occupy the capital, and Burgoyne was moving down through Canada with an apparently irresistible force to join Clinton in New York. In the face of these sinister facts Paul Jones forgot his injured vanity and the injustice of his supersedure, and turned his whole

attention to a consideration of the means to be employed in the equipment of the one ship which had been granted him by Congress. By the 23d of April he was again in Boston, and no sooner had he arrived than he was summoned to sit on two courts-martial, the first on the *Alfred*, the second on the *Hancock*. Proofs of the glaring incapacity of the men whom Congress had set over him were not wanting, and he expressed himself privately to his friend Morris, with a very natural bitterness, concerning the illiteracy of a captain, who was a member of both courts-martial and who could not sign his name to a record of the proceedings.

On May 4 he indited the long and often-quoted letter to Stuart Mawey, to inquire about his property in the West Indies. Freed at last from all fear of consequences from the disastrous occurrence in Tobago, he felt that he could now safely reveal his situation and send assistance to his family.

The first weeks of his stay in Boston were occupied by ineffectual efforts to procure a ship from the dilatory marine board of Massachusetts, and he sent various suggestions to Congress as to the fitting out of his prize, the *Mellish*, in case no American vessel was available. After this discouraging delay his spirits were revived by the receipt of a letter from Congress, on May 9, in which he was ordered to sail for Europe in the *Amphitrite*, and there to take command of the *Indien*, a splendid new frigate then being built in Amsterdam under the direction of Silas Deane, the American commissioner at Paris:

In Marine Committee,  
PHILADELPHIA, 9th May, 1777.

JOHN PAUL JONES, Esq.,

Sir:—

Congress have thought proper to authorize the Secret Committee to employ you on a voyage in the *Amphitrite* from Portsmouth to Carolina and France, where it is expected you will be provided with a fine frigate; and as your present commission is for the command of a particular ship, we now send you a new one whereby you are appointed a Captain in our Navy, and, of course, may command any ship in the service to which you are particularly ordered. You are to obey the orders of the Secret Committee, and we are Sir, &c.

(Signed)

JOHN HANCOCK  
ROB. MORRIS  
WM. WHIPPLE.

He was also directed to give immediate notice by letter to the commissioners in Paris of his arrival, and to request their instructions as to his further destination. He was told to take particular notice whilst on the coast of France or in a French port to keep his guns covered and concealed, so as to make as little warlike appearance as possible. On the same day the marine committee furnished him with the following official recommendation to the commissioners:

PHILADELPHIA, 9th May, 1777.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN:—

This letter is intended to be delivered to you by John Paul Jones, Esq., an active and brave commander in our Navy, who has already performed signal services

in vessels of little force; and in reward for his zeal, we have directed him to go on board the *Amphitrite*, a French ship of twenty guns, that brought in a valuable cargo of stores from Mons. Hortalez & Company, and with her to repair to France. He takes with him his commission, some officers and men, so that we hope he will, under that sanction, make some good prizes with the *Amphitrite*; but our design of sending him is (with the approbation of Congress), that you may purchase one of those fine frigates that Mr. Deane writes us you can get, and invest him with the command thereof as soon as possible. We hope you may not delay this business one moment, but purchase, in such port or place in Europe as it can be done with most convenience and despatch, a fine, fast sailing frigate or larger ship. Direct Captain Jones where he must repair to, and he will take with him his officers and men towards manning her. You will assign him some good house or agents to supply him with everything necessary to get the ship speedily and well equipped and manned—somebody that will bestir themselves vigorously in the business, and never quit it until it is accomplished.

If you have any plan of service to be performed in Europe by such a ship, that you think will be more for the interest and honour of the States than sending her out directly, Captain Jones is instructed to obey your orders; and, to save repetition, let him lay before you the instructions we have given him, and furnish you with a copy thereof. You can then judge what it will be necessary to direct him in, and whatever you do will be approved, as it will undoubtedly tend to promote the public service of this country.

You will see by this step how much dependence Congress places in your advices; and you must make it a

point not to disappoint Captain Jones' wishes and expectations on this occasion.

We are, &c.

(Signed)

The Honourable Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, Esquires, Commissioners, &c.

ROBERT MORRIS,  
RICHARD HENRY LEE,  
WM. WHIPPLE,  
PHIL. LIVINGSTON.

The marine committee, under the direction of Robert Morris, had long intended to compensate Jones for his deprivation of the command of the colonial fleet, and now carried out their design in this honorable appointment. Jones's feelings of satisfaction were expressed with the enthusiasm which always burst from his truly grateful heart at any marks of honor which were bestowed upon him. "This was generous indeed," he wrote to his friend Hewes, "and I shall feel the force of the obligation to the last moment of my life."

On the 26th of May Mr. Hewes wrote to him from Philadelphia, whither he had journeyed after the adjournment of the North Carolina assembly at Halifax, where he had lost his election to the Continental Congress. He had been forced to leave Philadelphia in the autumn on account of his seriously impaired health, and he was still further afflicted with rheumatism during the winter and unable to leave the South; but as a member of the firm of Hewes & Smith, ship-owners and Continental agents of Congress for the purchase and equipment of vessels ordered for the navy, he was far from idle. He was also a member of the secret com-



mittee of Congress, appointed for the purchase of these ships, and in these double and curiously consonant occupations he employed what energy he possessed with his usual conscientious zeal. He did not arrive in Philadelphia until some six weeks after Jones had departed for Boston, and was naturally much concerned to hear that his protégé had been superseded in the naval list of October 10. In words of sincere friendship and sympathy he wrote:

“My utmost endeavors shall be used to service you, from a conviction that you ought to command some who were placed higher than yourself.” He added also, by way of explaining the difficulty of obtaining appointments: “You will be surprised to hear how vast a number of applications are continually making for officers of the new frigates, especially for the command.” This letter, calculated to allay the burning sense of injustice which Jones felt at his supersedure was unfortunately long delayed in reaching him, and he was left to brood over his grievances for many months.

Immediately upon the receipt of his orders from the marine committee, Jones set about the business of engaging the force he was directed to take with him on the *Amphitrite*, but here, again, he encountered the hostile influence of Hopkins. The seamen he engaged through the Continental agent at Rhode Island were part of his old crew of the *Providence*, and were most eager to again sail under his command, but they were immediately impressed by Hopkins’s son, on the *Warren*, and prevented from joining him.

It is interesting to recall that the *Amphitrite* was the vessel sent over to America laden with ammunition and stores, for the assistance of the colonists, by Baron Beaumarchais. The extraordinary author of "The Marriage of Figaro" was, in fact, the very first Frenchman to propose practical support for the American insurgents. By the exercise of his unequalled tenacity and enthusiasm, he prevailed upon the French court to authorize the sending of this ship with supplies, which were, indeed, desperately needed by the indigent government at this critical moment of the Revolution. The house of Hortalez & Company, referred to in Jones's orders from Congress, was Beaumarchais himself, designated under this fictitious name. Beaumarchais believed in the success of America's struggles for independence while yet there were few to agree with him,<sup>1</sup> and not the least of the crimes of ingratitude which lie at the door of the Continental Congress was the disgraceful attempt to repudiate the country's debt to this ardent and invaluable friend.

In the last week of May Jones proceeded to Portsmouth to see and consult the captain of the *Amphitrite*, but on the 26th he wrote to the marine committee from that port to inform them that the French captain had refused to permit him to embark on board his ship, except as a passenger, conceiving that it would be "a dishonor to the French Flag to suffer an American commission to supersede his." The instructions of the marine committee had been, in fact, de-

<sup>1</sup> As early as September 21, 1775, Beaumarchais wrote in a memorial to Louis XVI: "America shall escape the English in spite of their efforts."

cidedly vague as to who should command on board the *Amphitrite*, and the refusal of her captain was in no way surprising. The committee made no further attempts to carry out this plan of transporting Jones and his force to Europe, and was very willing to accept Colonel Langdon's suggestion that Jones should take command of the Continental ship of war *Ranger*, then being built under his direction at Portsmouth and very near completion. On the 3d of June Jones wrote for the first time to the three commissioners in Paris—Franklin, Deane, and Arthur Lee—informing them that he was of the opinion that Langdon's suggestion would probably be adopted by Congress. "I ardently wish," he writes, in conclusion, to these gentlemen, "to be again in active service, and in the meantime the prospect I have of being shortly under your direction affords me a very singular pleasure, for although I am personally unknown to you, I altogether esteem your characters." Refused a command on the *Amphitrite*, Jones now returned to Boston to await further orders from Philadelphia. After a few more days of deliberation the marine committee decided to accept Langdon's proposition, and gave Jones command of the *Ranger*. On the 14th of June Congress passed two notable resolutions: the first, adopted the stars and stripes as the national banner of the United States; the second appointed Paul Jones to the command of the *Ranger*.

Resolved: That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, that the

Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation.

Resolved: That Captain Paul Jones be appointed to command the ship *Ranger*.

These resolutions were not simultaneous, and were passed among some sixteen others during the proceedings of the day; but, following the conclusions of Jones's first biographer, the impression became very prevalent that Congress intended to honor Paul Jones in their juxtaposition, and to link his name in glorious union with the first mention of the stars and stripes. Several of his later biographers have repeated the misstatement and still further promulgated the error. No claim to the honor was ever made by Jones himself, and there is no evidence to indicate that there was any intentional significance in the action of Congress.

On the 18th of June the marine committee, determined to aid their favorite officer in every way in their power, wrote him a most flattering letter, giving him unlimited orders and authorizing him, with Colonel Langdon and Captain Whipple, to engage and commission his officers. With the near prospect of action, Jones's feelings now became hopeful and even optimistic. He proceeded with eager alacrity to the business of manning his vessel. The *Ranger* was a new full-rigged ship of war, small but fast-sailing, and he was delighted with her. She was originally provided with twenty-six guns, but Jones decided that she was incapable of carrying more than eighteen six-pounders.

On the 2d of July he wrote to his friend Captain Parke, of Providence, asking his aid in enlisting his

crew, saying that he considered the *Ranger* "the best cruiser in America," and to Louis Charrier, of New Bedford, whose assistance he also requested, that "since the establishment of our Navy, no person in it has had so good, so fair a prospect of success." About this time he met with his brother officers in Boston to decide upon the uniform for the American navy. It is evident from his correspondence that although he was displeased with the manners and abilities of some of them, he was on friendly terms with many who undoubtedly better deserved his approbation. His relations with Captain McNeill, of North Carolina, based on the pleasant associations which always attached him to the home of his benefactors, were very intimate and prolonged for many years. During this time he formed a friendship with Major Frazer, another Southern officer of good birth and education, with some experience in the Continental army. In various letters, preserved in the collection of Jones's correspondence in Washington, there are glimpses of their mutual associations during his stay in Boston. Abraham Livingston and William Turnbull, merchants and Continental agents in that city, are referred to by Frazer as part of "our Boston family," which would indicate that they had all been stopping together at some boarding-house in Boston, one of those centres of hospitality described in the memoirs of the time, where Continental officers and sympathizers with the patriot cause were wont to meet in friendly and often convivial companionship. These men were evidently warmly attached to Jones and were on the most friendly and

serviceable terms with him. He furnished his enthusiastic friend Frazer with ample funds, and recommended him for the position of senior captain of the marine corps, which was to sail on the *Ranger*, an appointment which the major avowed he desired for "amusement" and the opportunity afforded for the free passage to Europe. Hearing of the previous appointment of Captain Roach to the *Ranger*, and of certain charges which led to his suspension, Jones, with great delicacy, prolonged his stay in Boston for a number of days before proceeding to Portsmouth to take command of the ship. His letter, despatched to Captain Roach on the 12th of July, furnishes the best possible proof of the real kindness of his attitude to his brother officers:

PORTSMOUTH, *July 12th, 1777.*

SIR:—

I am come here on a disagreeable errand, to supersede you, against whom I have no cause of complaint. Delicacy would not permit my more early appearance. I wish to give you time to consider whether your suspension can be in any respect owing to me. You must be convinced that it was not, when you recollect that I was appointed to command a far better ship than the *Ranger*. Besides, I think you believe me incapable of baseness. You will have an opportunity of disproving whatever may have been said to your disadvantage, and the charges against you, whatever they are, must be supported by incontestible facts. Otherwise, they will gain no credit with men of candor and ingenuity. Your present calamity may yet terminate in your future happiness, when it appears that you have been wrongfully charged. You will be entitled to a

greater share of public good will and approbation than you could otherwise have claimed.

I wish you well, and am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Very humble Servant,

JNO. P. JONES.

By his considerate delay in Boston, Jones missed the opportunity of joining in the Fourth of July celebration which took place in Portsmouth on the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. A contemporaneous account relates the manner in which the day was observed.

From the *Freeman's Journal*, Saturday, July 12, 1777:

Friday, the Fourth of July, being the anniversary of American Independency, the day was celebrated with joy and festivity. The forts and batteries fired a number of cannon. Captain Thomson gave a general invitation to all true friends to America and Independency to repair on board the Continental Frigate at twelve o'clock, where a cold collation was provided to refresh the visitors. At one o'clock the following toasts (toast) was drank throughout the ship,—prosperity, freedom and independency to the thirteen United States of America, which was proclaimed by firing thirteen guns on board the frigate, secondly the guns from the French ship and the Portsmouth private ship of war, which was succeeded with three cheers from the *Raleigh* and answered by the other ships, and a large concourse of people which were assembled on the wharfs, testified their joy and approbation on this ever memorable day, which ought never to be forgot by all the lovers of liberty.

On this occasion it would have been highly appropriate to unfurl for the first time the new national banner. Although it was not hoisted in battle and on land until August 6, over Fort Stanwix, Boston and Portsmouth were in a much more direct line of travel from Philadelphia than that far-distant post, and might easily have received the announcement of its adoption a month earlier. As Paul Jones had by this time received the news of his appointment to the *Ranger*, which was made on the same day as the adoption of the new flag, it is probable that the latter resolution had been promulgated in Portsmouth, and that flags of the new design were prepared and hoisted from the ships and forts on the Fourth of July. But the honor of first unfurling the stars and stripes from a ship of war, which has also been claimed for Paul Jones, is not supported by historical evidence. If he had been lucky enough to have had the opportunity of first unfurling the new national banner from the *Ranger*, it is not to be believed that he would have omitted to mention the fact.

As soon as he arrived in Portsmouth, Jones immediately set about the business of equipping and manning his ship. In the enlisting of his crew he found considerable difficulty, and, as in the case of the crews of the *Alfred* and the *Providence*, he undertook to aid the poverty-stricken government by advancing a portion of their wages. The seamen refused to engage for more than one cruise, and the advance of twenty dollars promised in the publicly posted hand-bills was agreed to by Congress only on condition of a longer engagement. Jones, realizing that these men must



enter with contentment upon their service, wrote to Lieutenant Elijah Hall, engaging himself to advance the sum promised, and promising also to leave a sum in Boston for half the monthly wages of the crew, to be drawn upon by their families during their absence. The patriotic character of this generous action needs no comment.

The month of July was spent in the tedious business of equipping the *Ranger*, and the time dragged on very slowly during the hot days of the summer. Jones wrote frequently to his friends Parke and Charrier, urging them to hasten the business of enlisting the crew. At the end of July he finally reported as to his progress and plans to Robert Morris, expressing his already fully matured ideas as to the best methods of carrying on the war on the coast of England. "I have ardently wished for an opportunity of distinguishing myself in an enterprising command," he wrote, "and I agree with you that our infant fleet cannot protect our own coast, and therefore ought to be employed to draw off the enemy's attention by attacking their defenceless places. I am persuaded that even with a trifling force, it is practicable to lay some of the enemy's cities under contribution, and to do indefinite damage to their shipping. I know them to be subject to panic under the least surprise, and the business may be effected before they have time for recollection." The period of inactivity and delay in equipping the *Ranger* was destined to be prolonged to a far greater extent than Jones had anticipated, and many weeks, and even months, were to pass before he could finally

set sail for the adventure which he so ardently desired; but the tedium of his days was soon relieved by the news of the near proximity of his friend Hewes at Boston.

A letter from John Adams to his wife, dated July 11, which was to be carried by Hewes himself, states that he departed from Philadelphia on that date to go to Boston. Adams's letter contains a characteristically clear description of his distinguished messenger. "Hewes has a sharp eye, a keen penetrating sense, but what is of much more importance, is a man of honor and integrity. I hope you will treat him with all the complacence due to his character. I almost envy him the journey although he travels for his health, which at present is infirm."

On the 27th Jones sent Hewes the following singularly affectionate and confiding appeal for reinstatement in his rank. He sent with this letter a packet containing various documents supporting his claim for reinstatement, and asking that his friends Livingston and Turnbull, in whose care he addressed the letter, should also inspect its contents and give him their opinion and advice:

PORTSMOUTH *Augt. 17th, 1777.*

MY DEAR AND HONORED SIR

Inclosed you have sundry letters &ca. which you are at liberty to use at discretion—for I can unbosom myself to you with the utmost confidence. You have laid me under the most singular obligations & you are indeed the Angel of my happiness; since to your Friendship I owe my present enjoyments, as well as

my future prospects. I will not attempt to thank you by letter—but endeavor to prove by my conduct that your Friendship and good opinion is not misplaced.

I do not at present expect an alteration to take place in the line of Rank—but I will hope for a Seperate Command, by which I may be enabled to distinguish myself in the Service; for I should esteem it a greater disgrace and a worse hardship, to be set under the command of any Man who was not in the Navy as early as myself, than to be fairly Broke and expelled the Service—especially as the Man I speak of cannot plead Superiour knowledge, or Superiour Services; and many of them with whom I have conversed, McNeill among the rest, have had candour enough to acknowledge that they did not expect to come into the Service in any other Capacity than as Junior Officers. I aver that many of them durst not step forth at the beginning in such ships as the *Alfred* then was, and at a time when Independence had not even been mentioned out of doors. I know what misfortune is, and I dare meet it again, in its most frightful aspect, rather than lose my Rank. There are characters, among the thirteen in the list, who are truely contemptible, with such, as a private Gentleman, I would disdain to Sit down, I would disdain to be acquainted. I am no prophet, but, an alteration in the Navy Rank will take place at a period not far distant. Justice will point out the Necessity of that alteration. Should it not take place will it not leave room for reflection?—and how will any Gentleman now in the Service be assured that he will not also be superceded by men of *Presumptive abilities*? I am very far from meaning to reflect on the Gentlemen who drew that line of Rank. I am persuaded that it was done with intentional Impartiality; but they have been misled by misrepresentation; and their

not being long conversant in Navy matters laid them open to opposition. I esteem several of the thirteen Captains by whom I am at present superceded—but until they give proof of their superiour abilities I never shall acknowledge them as my Senior Officers—I never will act under their command.

I enclose a Copy of my letter to the Marine Committee on the subject of Rank when I supposed myself superceded by one man; and I am by no means inclined to retract my sentiments now, that I find (my) self superseded by a number.—If I had deserved this, I am unworthy of bearing a Commission, I am unworthy of drawing my sword in the Cause of Freemen. I am uncertain whether Mr. Morris did or did not think it expedient to lay that matter before the Committee—perhaps he did not. I would not make a difficulty about trifles, but this is no trifle to me. I have last winter Paid off the sloop *Providence*, and ship *Alfred* from the beginning; and from the date of my first Commission until now, I have received no more public money, as an individual, than the Fifty pounds which was Ordered by the Committee this time Twelve Month to provide Cabin Stores at Philadelphia and I have now no prospect of a Settlement. In the time of Twelve Weeks, including the time of fitting out the *Alfred* at Rhode Island, I took twenty four prizes—among which was only one Sloop—and I have received little more than three Thousand Dollars as my share of prize Money. Yet these and a thousand other disagreeable circumstances I consider as trifles—but, to be superseded after all is insupportable.—The *Ranger's* Top-Sails will be sent to-morrow—and I hope to overcome all the Difficulty that subsisted when I took this Command and to have the *Ranger* at sea much sooner than any other ship in the Service hath yet been. I may venture to affirm that there is not one of the thir-

teen persons in question who would in my situation, proceed to sea without a settlement—yet I will go.

I am deeply sensible of the many distinctions and preferences which I have lately experienced from Congress, as well as from the Marine and Secret Committees. I am incapable of Ingratitude, and ardently wish to be employed in such Enterprising services, as will convince them that I have not deserved their former neglect. I now understand that the *Raleigh* and *Alfred* are, by the advice of Captain Whipple and Colo. Langdon, destined for France in Order to provide the *Raleigh* with Stores, altho' she is now Laden as deep as a Merchant Ship. I mention this as there is a probability of our Junction there and I am pre-determined not to serve under that dull inactive Genius,<sup>1</sup> who would serve with more reputation in a Dock Yard than as a Commander in the Navy. There are Frigets now building and lately built in France that mount Thirty two Guns on One Deck—I wish for the Command of one of these Ships—and indeed for the present, we ought to build Ships of no other Construction—they sail exceedingly fast, and are capable of carrying Eighteen pounders.

Please to put the complaint against Captain Manly into the hands of General Warren—it will give me much pleasure to hear from you before you leave Boston, and I request yours and Mr. Livingston's free sentiments and advice on this letter. I have had the greatest respect for his Father and for Colo. R. H. Lee and could be happy in corresponding with them.

Please to inform me to whom you Communicate the paper which I shewed you in Philadelphia, and whether you think it prudent for me to shew it to any person this way. You will soon hear of my destination. I

<sup>1</sup> Captain Thompson, of the *Raleigh*, afterward dismissed from the navy.

can write you to Philadelphia before I sail. I will hope to hear from you in France should I proceed there.

I have many things to say on Navy Matters—but must at Present conclude with repeating what I have repeatedly advanced—I mean that short enlistments are Incompatible with the Necessary Subordination of a Navy—therefore I aver that the Seamen of these States ought to be Registered and made subject to serve in their turns for three years at one time. I have the honor to be with much respect and perfect Esteem,

Sir,

Your very Obligated

Very Obedient

Most humble Servant

J. P. J.

The Honble.

Joseph Hewes.

No efforts on the part of Mr. Hewes, devoted as he was to Jones's interests, produced any result. By the 25th of August, as stated in one of Frazer's letters, "Mr. Hewes has gone to the southward," and another of Abraham Livingston's states that the letter to Hewes, which had been sent to his care, had safely arrived, but not the packet which accompanied it. The letter from Livingston is kind, even paternal in tone. He advises Jones to refrain from criticism of his brother officers, and promises to "do the needful" in the way of presenting his letter to Hewes in Philadelphia, where it was his expectation of meeting him before long, avowing that if he fails to serve him it will be for lack of opportunity rather than of desire.

This was the sort of influence which always calmed

Jones instantly and restored his equilibrium, as is shown in the following brief letter to Hewes, in which he recapitulates the situation in a spirit of perfect reasonableness and promises to pay obedient attention to his advice:

PORTSMOUTH *Sept.* 1st, 1777.

MY DEAR AND HONORED SIR

Inclosed you have copies of sundry letters &c. which I forwarded to you on the 17th Ulto. under cover to Messrs. Livingston and Turnbull and which I fully expected would have reached your hands in Boston, but by carelessness or otherwise the Packet hath never reached their hands and is I fear entirely lost. Inclosed you have also the copy of my letter of the 24th to Mr. Morris, and of the 30th to the Commissioners at Paris. The reason of my then writing to Mr. Morris appears in the letter. I look up to him and to you with sentiments of the highest esteem and Gratitude and my first wish is to appear deserving in his and in your sight and to have it in my power to render Eminent Services to America. Perhaps my fears have been needless. I will rely on the goodness of Congress. I hope they will not put me under the command of men who durst or did not embark in the Navy before the 7th of December, 1775, for I assure you I dread such dishonor worse than Death. I can have no desire to decline the service while the liberties of America are doubtful. It is my pride and glory that I was one of the first who endeavored to defend her Just rights; suffer me but to continue in the line wherein I embarked. I ask no more, or if that be too much, I am willing to stand an examination with any one, or with every one of the Thirteen persons by whom I am at present superseded, and will yield the point to superior services and abilities. I cannot now hope

for the pleasure of hearing from you before my departure, which is fast approaching. I however will expect that pleasure when I reach France, for by a late letter from Mr. Morris to Genl. Whipple it appears that Congress still mean that I should attend to my former Orders from the Secret Committee.

I am not disgusted, nor under a Childish pet; but I will continue in the Service in the hopes that the day is not far distant when my present fears and apprehensions will be finally removed; in the meantime I mean only to express my sentiments in decent tho' manly language. I confess in the Overflowing of my heart that the command of the important expedition which was allotted to me by Mr. Morris last winter far exceeded my expectation. I am also deeply sensible of the distinctions and preference which I have since that time experienced from Congress and from the Marine and the Secret Committees, and, I attribute the mistake in the line of Rank not to intention, but to your absence, and to the partial recommendations which were then exhibited.

I rely on your Friendship—I promise to pay attention to your advice, and I most sincerely am

My dear Sir your very Obligated very Obedient most humble Servant

J. P. J.

The Honble. Joseph Hewes.

On September 6 the marine committee sent Jones his final orders, directing him to sail as soon as possible for a convenient port in France, and to report immediately to the commissioners upon his arrival. A letter of September 7 to his friend Captain McNeill announces that he is at last ready for sea, and expresses the wish that McNeill, who has similar orders



for Europe, might sail in his company. The letter contains a generous and interesting reference to the gallant Nicholas Biddle, who later met a glorious death in the explosion of his ship *Randolph*, in a gallant encounter with an overwhelmingly superior enemy: "It is reported here that Captain Biddle hath lately met with great success on a cruise of only five days from Charlestown, having taken and carried in five Jamaica ships, two of them ships of twenty and eighteen guns. They sailed in a squadron bound for New York. The twenty gun ship ran alongside of the *Randolph* and ordered Biddle to strike, he answered 'He would salute first.' The action was short with the ships of force, and they having yielded, their convoy was yielded of course. It gives me pleasure to hear this account, especially as Biddle hath been for a long time unfortunate. Should it prove true, it will give a spring to our Navy operations."

Although ready, as he supposed, to set sail by the first favoring breeze, two more additional months of intolerable delays were still to drag by before Jones was finally able to put to sea, and under this torture he was unable to maintain his reasonable frame of mind and became again a prey to tormenting reflections. The following communication to the marine committee, dated the 29th of October, gives a lively idea of some of the annoyances he was subjected to during this trying period:

With all my industry I could not get a single suit of sail completed until the twentieth current. Since that time the winds and weather have laid me under

the necessity of continuing in port. At this time it blows a very heavy gale from the northeast; the ship with difficulty rides it out, with yards and topmasts struck and whole cables ahead. When it clears up I expect the wind from the northwest and shall not fail to embrace it, altho' I have not now a spare sail, nor materials to make one. Some of those I have are made of Hissings, a coarse thin stuff. I never before had so disagreeable a service to perform as that which I have now accomplished, and of which another will claim the credit as well as the profit. However, in doing my utmost, I am sensible that I have done no more than my duty. I have now to acknowledge the honor of having received your orders of the 6th Ulto., and that I have before me the pleasing prospect of being the welcome messenger at Paris of the joyous and welcome news of Burgoyne's surrender. I have received despatches from the Council of Massachusetts for the Commissioners, by express. I shall therefore not go out of my course unless I see a fair opportunity of distressing the enemy, and of rendering services to America.

On the 30th of October he again poured out the burden of his overcharged heart in the following farewell letters to his friends Hewes and Morris:

*Ranger, PORTSMOUTH 30th Oct. 1777.*

MY DEAR AND HONORED SIR:—

I herewith inclose copies of my letters &ca. since you left Portsmouth. You will no doubt be Surprised to find that the *Ranger* is still in port—but the Wonder must cease when you understand that with all my own and my Officers Application and Industry I have not been able to complete a Single Suite of Sails till

within these few days past—and other materials have been equally Backward. Had not my officers exerted themselves in procuring Materials the *Ranger* might have remained in port as long as the *Raleigh*. I never before had so disagreeable a service to perform as this which I have now accomplished, and of which Another will claim the Credit as well as the profit.

I have been fully manned for near two months past—so you may imagine what I must have felt on being thus detained by a heavy Gale from the N.E.—when it clears up I purpose to embrace the first Wind that can carry me thro' the *Enemies lines* and off the Coast.—I have received Orders and despatches from France and hope to be the welcome Messenger at Paris of Burgoyne's Surrender, &ca., &ca.

I have now to inform you that a few days ago I had the honor to receive by post your esteemed favor of the 26th May 1776 from Philadelphia—directed to me as Commander of the *Providence* at New York.—my best thanks Sir, are particularly due to you for the Sentiments of Regard therein expressed.—this letter had I been in doubt before, would now confirm me in the belief that had you been present in Congress the 10th day of October 1776 I should have held my proper Rank in the Service which (if I was worthy of my first Commission) is No. 5—not No. 18.—

That I should be thus degraded and set under Thirteen men, who durst not nor did not Embark in the dispute, and in ships unfit for War like the *Alfred*, as Early as myself, distracts my very Soul! A sea officer who can bear to be superseded by any man of *Presumptive Abilities* and talk or can think coolly of it is a Villain! I know one person among the Thirteen who, *after I had embarked in the Service*, made a private agreement with the Captain of one of the *Enemies Ships* to carry himself, his Family and effects off the

Continent. This can at any time be proved by the testimony of his Neighbors. I can find many other exceptions among them—and not one of them can teach me my duty—or will ever go further with a Small force in the Service than I have already done and mean to do again whenever an Opportunity offers. I should be to the last degree Unhappy were it not for the hopes I have that Congress will yet do me right. I cannot think of quitting the Service—my whole mind is rapt in the Dispute! But how shall I have Spirit to perform my Duty while I think myself degraded and out of my proper Place? Without boasting, you know Sir, that I have not deserved this.

As you have been pleased to say in your letter that "I ought to have Commanded some who were" (at the beginning) "placed in a higher Rank than myself, —I shall only add that I would lay down my life for America—but can never trifle with my delicate notions of Honour.

You will please to excuse the liberty which I have taken in Joining your Name with that of my friend Abraham Livingston in a General letter of Attorney for the disposal of the Captor's part of all prizes that may be taken by the *Ranger* and that may Arrive in any part of America—excepting only the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Should you decline to Act in behalf of the Captors you will singularly Oblige by Appointing such person or persons Within any or every of the Nine States not excepted as you think will do Justice and render satisfaction. As you know that the Credit of the Service depends not only on dealing fairly with the men Employed in it, but on their belief that they are and will be fairly dealt with.

You will also be pleased to excuse the liberty I have taken by inserting the Esteemed Names of Robert

Morris and Joseph Hewes in my own private Letter of Attorney and, as *Executors*, in my Will—both of which will be herewith forwarded into the hands of Mr. Morris with Duplicates for you.

Major Frazer goes with me as a Volunteer—He wishes to have an Employment in the Marine Service—and desires to assist me on my private Enterprize—he hath given a description so truly Elysian to a small Estate on the Mattapony, Virginia, that I wish to become the purchaser. He writes his friend Colo. Braxton thro' the Hands of Mr. Morris to whom I will transmit the necessary Sum— I wish you could satisfy yourself respecting the Situation and properties of the Lands &c. before the purchase.

I most ardently wish for the Command of some Spirited private Enterprize whereby I may be enabled to prove that I have not merited the disgrace of being Superseded.

I will hope to hear frequently from you while in France to care of Thos. Morris, Esqr., Agent Nantes—in the meantime I am with Grateful Sentiments of perfect Esteem and regard,

Dear Sir

Your very much Obliged  
Most humble Servt.

J. P. J.

The Honorable  
Joseph Hewes.

*Ranger*, PORTSMOUTH 30th October, 1777.

HONORED AND DEAR SIR

I herewith inclose duplicates of my letters &ca. to you since I took command of the *Ranger*—I have left open the letters and papers &ca. directed for Mr. Hewes which I beg of you to peruse before you forward them.—my situation is a truly delicate one—Super-

seded by thirteen persons, not one of whom had embarked in the Navy when my first Commission was dated—some of whom durst not or at least did not then nor for many months afterwards avow their Republican Sentiments but were on the other side, if we may judge from the private Testimony of their Neighbors—not one of whom is better acquainted with Navy matters than myself—and several of whom are altogether illiterate and Utterly ignorant of Marine affairs.—this is my situation, and the more I think of it the more Unhappy I am,—when I reach France I must expect to meet with Gentlemen who consider themselves as my Senior Officers and by whom I am superseded—in acknowledging their Seniority must I not also obey their Commands and Confess that their Promotion over me was the Reward of their Superiour Service and abilities—and how much must I then be humbled! may not the World believe that others have cast me thus far at a distance and thrown me out in the pursuit of Honor—the thought distracts my very Soul!—Why alas! should my Honor and my Duty seem incompatible?—tho this may appear a Solecism yet it's reality affects me more than all the former misfortune of my Life—some of them were perhaps br'ot about by my own misconduct—this I am sure was not,—I cannot think of quitting the Service especially while the liberties of America are Unconfirmed—I must therefore look up to you as my Patron and Protector—Shall I take the liberty to add, as my kind Friend and Benefactor—with full dependence that you will do your Utmost to set me right so as to enable me to continue in the Service.

In my letter of 28th. July I mentioned Major Frazer of Virginia—that Gentleman goes with me as a Volunteer as he wishes to be employed in the Marine Service—should that be agreeable to Congress he will,

from his rank in the Army, be Senior Officer in the Marines—and he expresses a strong desire to accompany me in any private Expedition—it is my first and most ardent Wish to be entrusted with the Command of some Spirited Enterprise—where I can have an Opportunity of proving that I have not merited the disgrace of being superseded.

I must beg you to pardon the Liberty I have taken in inserting the Esteemed names of Robert Morris and Joseph Hewes in a private letter of Attorney; and, as Executors, in my Will, both of which are herewith inclosed—Inclosed is also a letter from Major Frazer to his friend Col<sup>l</sup>. Braxton of Virginia respecting the purchase of a small estate on the Mattaponi which I must request you to forward or not as you think most for my benefit agreeable to the letter of Attorney—I would only observe that I should be glad to own such place as that is by description, but Col<sup>o</sup>. Braxton will give you a better account of it.—

Altho' I have not 'till now been able to get in readiness with the *Ranger*—yet I assure you my utmost Efforts have not been wanting. The Ship was Manned in very little time indeed the only instance of the kind that I remember in the Service—I have an Orderly well disciplined and spirited Crew consisting of an hundred and forty odd—and since the first of Sept<sup>r</sup>. our Department hath been Impeded Soly thro' the want of Canvass and many of the principle materials.—

May I indulge myself in the hope of hearing from you in France? Nothing could afford so much relief to my anxious mind. I attribute my not having had that Honor since I came here to the commotions in Pennsylvania—and to your Opinion of my more early departure.

As the dirty and Ungrateful insinuations of the late Commodore Esek Hopkins to the Committee in March

last hath given me much concern—I have taken the liberty to inclose a letter which I rec. on that subject from Mr. Jarvis after my return to Boston—I know that you were perfectly Satisfied before—and I hope every other Gentleman was so. But I will leave no room for refutation.

John Wendell Esqr. of this Place, a Gentleman of great landed Interest and of an extensive Circle of Friends in Congress, has had the goodness to write a variety of letters in my behalf respecting the line of rank and Command. His friends will from his remonstrance mention the matter to you—and he expects use their utmost interest in Congress—however I would not wish to create a General Uneasiness in the Service—if I am entrusted with the Command of an expedition and should be so fortunate as to Succeed in it—no exception can then be taken at my promotion.

The Inclosed Receipt from Major Gardner will I believe Sufficiently explain the Situation of My little private concerns in the Eastern States If I knew any men whom I could esteem more than yourself and Mr. Hewes I would not have given you this trouble—Should any letters Appear for me directed to your care in consequence of the Indulgent liberty which you gave me—I am sure they will be duly forwarded, I am with a Heart overflowing with Sentiments of perfect Gratitude Esteem and respect,

Honored and dear Sir

Your Very Obligated

very obedient

most humble Servant,

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>

J. P. J.

Robt. Morris.

It is perfectly easy to discern in this very full presentation of Jones's thoughts to his confidential friends



the true motives of his conduct. Under the degree of suffering expressed in these letters, it must always be remembered to his credit that he did not quit the service in disgust. We see here no complaint of vanity at the deprivation of his command of the fleet which was promised to him, but bitter and agonized resentment crying aloud in reiterated protest against the insult of his degradation in rank. The line of demarcation which divides the one from the other is perfectly clear, and should be observed at this time and carefully borne in mind if any accurate estimate of Jones's true character and motives is to be reached.

The long delay had now come to an end, and the hour of his departure was at hand. His rising spirits were further exalted by the glorious news of Burgoyne's surrender, which, as he writes, reached him about this time, and the official announcement of which he was requested to carry to France. Jones, however, was not the only bearer of the news, for a copy only of the official document was given to him, the original having been already despatched by John Loring Austin, secretary to the Massachusetts board of war, who had sailed on the packet *Perch* from Boston on the 31st of October. A few more letters preserved in his correspondence supply the details of his final occupations during these last days. He dined familiarly with the rich and influential Mr. Wendell, of Portsmouth, whose son, placed under his command, was recommended to his particular care and attention as a "relative of the Hancocks" and of Jones's First Lieutenant Simpson. He directed his friend

Frazer to write about the purchase of his long-dreamed-of home in Virginia,<sup>1</sup> testifying in this way that his last thought on leaving the country was of a final return and a happy residence within its borders. He bade farewell to his Portsmouth friends, and then he hoisted the stars and stripes to the *Ranger's* mast-head and, on November 2, put out to sea.

<sup>1</sup> This contemplated purchase was never consummated, but represents the only reference to any home or land in Virginia existing in his MSS.

## CHAPTER IX

### ARRIVAL IN EUROPE

ONCE free from the annoyances of delay, which were so particularly disturbing to Jones's temper, and again afloat, he regained his normal poise, and entered into a mood of cheerful activity as native to his mind as the deck was to his feet.

The voyage across the Atlantic lasted a month, and as it was late in the year he encountered toward the end of it much severe weather. On the 29th of November, in a heavy gale, the *Ranger* hove to off the Bay of Biscay. On Monday the weather cleared and they sighted land from the mast-head, and on the following day ran in for the shore, just escaping a sand-bank, but arrived all in good spirits, as is related in Doctor Ezra Green's quaint little diary, at "Pean-beauf," on the River Loire, near the port of Nantes, and came to anchor in the evening. A few days after Jones landed he despatched an account of his voyage to the marine committee, in which the high enthusiasm of his mood is clearly shown. The *Ranger* had disappointed him in her sailing qualities, but he makes no comment except to explain how he intends to remedy her defects, and speaks of his crew with commendation.

The character of his letters altered so sadly under the repeated disappointments he was called upon to

bear that it is pleasant to note the original qualities of his mind before his misfortunes had put it out of tune. "After passing the Western Islands," he writes, "I fell in with and brought to a number of ships. I took two brigantines from Malaga. I fell in with a fleet of ten sail under a strong convoy, but notwithstanding all my efforts, was unable to cut any of them out."

He does not mention in this letter that it was the *Invincible*, a British ship of seventy-four guns, which was convoying this fleet out of the Mediterranean, a possible reason for this omission being that he was reluctant to confess that he had lost two days in the hopeless chase, and in so doing had missed the opportunity of being the first to bring the official news of Burgoyne's surrender to the commissioners in Paris. John Loring Austin had landed at Nantes on the 30th of November, and by the time Jones had arrived was well on his way to Paris with the news.

Speaking of the *Indien*, the ship which had been promised him by Congress, he says:

I understand that the commissioners have provided for me one of the finest ships that ever was built, but were under the necessity of giving her up. My unfeigned thanks are equally due for the intention as for the act.

This was the largest of the frigates which were being built in Europe under Silas Deane's direction, with the aid of French funds and French engineers, and Jones had been sent to Europe with the express object

of assuming her command as a recompense for his deprivation of the colonial fleet. The manner in which he accepted this second disappointment could hardly be excelled.

On the 4th of December, which was the day after he had come up to Nantes from Paimbœuf, he wrote for the first time to the commissioners, giving a brief account of his voyage and assuring them that he would await their orders with particular pleasure. On the next day he wrote again, giving his own views as to the best method of conducting an aggressive warfare against the enemy's coast. "I am here," he wrote, "and ready to receive, and to pay cheerful and prompt obedience to your orders. It is my first and favorite wish to be employed in active and enterprising services where there is a prospect of rendering acceptable services to America. The singular honor which Congress hath done me, in their generous acknowledgment of my past services hath inspired me with sentiments of gratitude which I shall carry with me to my grave. I have always, since we had ships of war, been persuaded that small squadrons could be employed to far better advantage on private expeditions, and would distress the enemy infinitely more than the same force could do by cruising either jointly or separately. Were strict survey observed on our part, the enemy have many important places in such defenceless situations, that they might effectually be surprised and attacked, with no very considerable force. We cannot yet fight their Navy, as their numbers and force is so far superior to ours, therefore it seems to be our natural prov-

ince to surprise their defenceless places and thereby divide their attention and draw it off from our coasts."

These conclusions, both brief and lucid, represented the result of his long habit of close thought upon the best possible methods to be employed in fighting the battles of his adopted country. Their wisdom and common-sense were immediately approved by the commissioners and their execution left unquestioningly to the man who had conceived them. The responsibility for their success was thus put entirely upon his shoulders.

While awaiting a reply to this letter to the commissioners Jones busied himself with the task of refitting and improving the *Ranger*, which needed shorter masts and heavier ballast. This tiresome business was relieved by the pleasant associations he had formed with the group of Continental agents then resident at Nantes, who had given Jones and his officers a most cordial welcome upon their arrival. Jonathan Williams, whom Doctor Green describes as "a most amiable character," was the first of these. He was Franklin's nephew, and was afterward distinguished as the founder of the military academy at West Point. The commissioners had appointed him to his office, in association with Thomas Morris and his partner, M. Penet, in the spring of this year, and he occupied apartments at Nantes, where Jones was frequently received. At this moment of his ardent youth he fulfilled to perfection Jones's *beau ideal* of "candor and ingenuity," and they entered into a brotherly and most loving intimacy from the very first moment of

their meeting. Thomas Morris also owed his appointment to a distinguished relative, his half-brother, Robert Morris, but was very unreliable and dissipated in his habits, and was on the point of being dismissed from his post when his death, a few weeks after Jones's arrival, removed him from his duties. John Ross, also employed as an agent for the purchase of supplies for the Continental cruisers, was another member of this group, and with him also Jones began a life-long relation of confidence and friendship. Williams's particular province was the forwarding of important letters to and from the commissioners, and to his care Jones intrusted all his official communications.

Jones found it necessary to avoid further association with his convivial friend Frazer, who soon departed from Nantes, leaving his unpaid notes and his servant in Jones's hands. He refers to him in the following hitherto unpublished letter to his partner, Robert Morris, too frankly expressive of his inmost feelings at this moment to be omitted:

*Ranger, NANTES, 11th December 1777*

HONORED AND DEAR SIR:—

As the situation of affairs in Pennsylvania, when I sailed from Portsmouth, rendered the conveyance of letters from the Eastern States not altogether certain, I take the Liberty of inclosing copies of those which I had the honor of writing to you while fitting out.

It is not in my nature to persist intentionally in an error, therefore I always wish to take the earliest opportunity of acknowledging a mistake; and as it now appears from the situation of affairs, and more espe-

cially from the important step that was taken in my favor by the commissioners, in obedience to the generous and liberal sentiments and orders of the Secret Committee that Congress have had my Honor and Benefit at Heart; I must conclude also that it is not intended to place me under the command of men who durst not, or did not step forth as soon as myself. In this flattering belief I bid defiance to danger, and enjoy once more the cheerful Ardour and Spirit, which alone can animate and support an Officer in the performance of his duty. To be continued in the line wherein I stepped forth, and found acceptance at the beginning, was, and is the height of my ambition; but for me to fight under men who held back, and did not appear in the first doubtful juncture, and who cannot now teach me my duty, is impossible, nor will it be expected by men of Candour and Ingenuity.

When I have the honour of hearing from the Commissioners, I will return my thanks to the Secret Committee, but what form of thanks shall I render to you? \* \* \* \* I am utterly at a loss, nor know how to begin, the obligations I owe to you are so many, so important and were so unexpected, that I must be grateful indeed did I not feel more than I can express. But I detest flattery, therefore must decline the subject, lest I should enrobe fair truth in that flattering dress. Yes, sir, I feel by a prophetic impulse in my breast that I shall either manifest a grateful sense of your friendship by my conduct in life, or by meeting my death in support of the great cause wherein you have borne so noble and so respected a part.

It gives me pain to inform you that I found Mr. Frazer to be a person different from what I thought him in America; he is subject to drink even to intoxication, which is at least a weakness utterly incompatible with the Characteristic of a good Officer; how-



our placid horizon until after we had passed the Everlasting mountains of the Sea (called Azores) whose tops are in the clouds, and whose foundations are in the center. When lo! this halcyon season was interrupted! The gathering fleets o'erspread the sea and war alarms began, nor ceased day or night until aided by the mighty Boreas, we cast Anchor in this asylum the 2nd. current, but since I am not certain that my poetry will be understood, it may not be amiss to add, by way of marginal note, that after leaving Portsmouth nothing remarkable happened until I got to the eastward of the Western Islands, and from that time until my arrival here I fell in with ships every day, sometimes every hour. My heart glows with the most fervent gratitude for every unsolicited and unexpected instance of the favor and approbation of Congress, and if a Life of Services devoted to the interests of America can be made instrumental in Securing its Independence, I shall be the happiest of men. I esteem your son as a promising and deserving young man. I have just now had some conversation with him and am much pleased with his diffidence and modesty. He would not, he says, accept of a commission until he thinks himself equal to the duty of the office of Lieutenant. There I think he shows the true spirit. Anything in my power to render his situation happy and instructive shall not be wanting. I must rely on you to make my best compliments to the fair Miss Wendell, and to the other agreeable Ladies of my acquaintance in Portsmouth. I cannot, at present, give you my address, but will drop you another how do you do shortly.

On the 17th the commissioners in Paris replied to Jones, summoning him, as soon as he should find it possible, to proceed thither for a consultation. On

the 22d, having received these orders, he wrote to the marine committee that as the ship *Independence* was still in port it was his duty to inform them of the receipt of this letter and to proceed immediately to Paris. He wrote that he should remain away from his ship as brief a time as possible, and promised to use his best endeavors to transmit accounts of his proceedings. On the 23d he replied to the commissioners, saying that he would wait to respond to their summons only so long as was necessary to advance the repairs of the *Ranger* to a point where they might progress without him, and render her fit for sea upon his return.

It must have been very nearly the new year when Paul Jones arrived in Paris for the first time, to enter into association with European diplomacy, through the American commissioners, and to enjoy the first benefits of his friendship with Franklin. His credentials from the marine committee had been most flattering, and encouraging news from home lent a hopeful atmosphere to the American embassy, for this is what the residence of the commissioners at Passy was entitled to be called.

The manner of the announcement of Burgoyne's surrender was narrated to Jones upon his arrival and must have accentuated his regret that he himself had not been the first messenger of the wonderful news. A vivid record of the scene of the announcement is preserved in an old and rare copy of a Boston monthly magazine:

The commissioners had assembled at Dr. Franklin's apartments, on the rumor that a special messenger

had arrived, and were too impatient to suffer a moment's delay. They received him in the courtyard, before he had time to alight. Dr. Franklin addressed him: "Sir, is Philadelphia taken?" "Yes Sir." The old gentleman clasped his hands and returned to the house. "But Sir, I have greater news than that, General Burgoyne and his whole Army are prisoners of War." The effect was electrical; the dispatches were scarcely read before they were put under copy. Mr. Austin himself was impressed into the service of transcribing them. Communication was without delay made to the French Minister at Versailles.

It is interesting to know from other contemporary records that it was none other than Caron de Beaumarchais who was the messenger, and who, with Arthur and William Lee, Silas Deane, Izard, Doctor Bancroft, and Franklin, were dining together at the home of the commissioners in Passy, to await Mr. Austin. Beaumarchais (that same impetuous Beaumarchais who broke the windows to ventilate Marie Antoinette's little theatre at Versailles at the first performance of his "Marriage of Figaro") jumped into his chaise and drove so furiously in the darkness of the winter's night to Versailles that the chaise was upset by the road-side and his arm dislocated for his pains.

Such thrilling news as the surrender of the great English army was, indeed, sufficient to turn the head of the French enthusiast and enough to raise the calm philosophy of Franklin to a mood of confidence and courage; and this was the mood in which he received the man who was destined to be his chief support in

the war as waged by the Americans in Europe. Once before, in the course of his life of extraordinary alternations of fortune, Paul Jones had been brought into contact with a group of individuals representing a strategic centre of important influence and a moulding school of manners. It has been seen how his early and providential experience in North Carolina, under the patronage of the aristocratic and powerful Willie Jones, had illuminated and given opportunity to his ambition. But this preparation was only introductory to the rôle he was now about to play in Europe.

The house at Passy which was the residence of the American commissioners during the period of the Revolution was lent to them by a generous sympathizer with our cause, M. Leray de Chaumont, who held important naval appointments from the French Government, with which he was in confidential relations. The gift of this spacious official residence was reluctantly accepted by Franklin and openly objected to by Adams, but it was probably countenanced if not instigated by the French court, which desired this convenient retreat for the representatives of the nation it secretly wished to protect. It served, in fact, as a meeting-place for the sympathizers as well as the representatives of the new republic. It became the principal rendezvous of politicians, gazetteers, soldiers of fortune, and soldiers of the highest rank and importance. The house occupied by the commissioners was only a dependance of the property owned by M. de Chaumont, which had then belonged to him but a few months, having been originally the residence of

the Duchesse de Valentinois, and still called the Hotel Valentinois. There were two houses on the estate, which was considerable, one designated "le grand hôtel" and the other "le petit hôtel," the larger being occupied by M. de Chaumont and his family and the other by the commissioners. The relations of the two households, separated as they were only by a garden, became naturally intimate, and the proximity of Franklin, who became the idol of the French court and the admiration of the entire nation, was a source of infinite pride and pleasure to his host, himself somewhat of a philosopher and anxious to please the court and to be serviceable to its favorite. At the time when Jones first visited Passy, where he was destined to be later a frequent and honored guest, Franklin had been about a year in residence, and the unfortunate Silas Deane, his co-commissioner, already involved in difficulties, was soon to return to America, recalled by a resolution passed on the 8th of December, 1777, to give an account of his financial transactions with government funds, before the bar of Congress. This was brought about by the unjust suspicions of the third commissioner, Arthur Lee, the marplot of the Revolution, whose stormy disposition and jealous distrust caused more trouble to his colleagues than any other of the many difficulties which they were forced to meet. The bitter enemy of Franklin, the cause of the ruin of Deane and of Beaumarchais, the dupe of English spies, this misguided patriot, for such his sincere love of America declared him to be, was also the cause of infinite distress to Jones, and proved himself in the

latter's affairs an obstructionist and an enemy of the most dangerous kind.

Over this nest of dissension, hid away in the peaceful retreat of Passy, the calm philosophy of the all-knowing, the wellnigh all-powerful Franklin fortunately held sway, and to the refuge of his friendship, his unerring and kindly protection, Paul Jones was ever welcome to return for assistance and advice. His relation with the best and greatest Americans, most fortunately maintained in the case of Hewes and Morris, was again exemplified in the case of Franklin. Paul Jones found in him from the first his principal ally and supporter, and their minds, practical, efficient, and far-seeing, entered at once into active alliance, Franklin receiving Jones's suggestions and on his own initiative planning large schemes for his employment in connection with the French allies. He recognized at once the superb fighting instrument which Jones represented, and was fully as eager as the latter's admirers of the marine committee to see his splendid powers in action. The tenor of their correspondence, which was fully preserved by them both, shows a reverence on Jones's part and a paternal affection on the part of the sage, fond, admiring, and yet reserved, as if he feared too greatly to praise a favorite son. Like a father, Franklin corrected the young man, warning him of dangers and sharply reproving his faults of temper. Fortunate, indeed, for the cause of America as for Paul Jones that he found such protection and advice at the outset of his European career.

Although received with flattering cordiality by the

commissioners, the news which awaited Jones upon his arrival was far from exhilarating, as far as the principal object of his mission was concerned, for the rumor of the sale of the *Indien*, and the loss of his promised command, was fully confirmed. The British ambassador, Elliot, at The Hague, had discovered the secret of the ownership and destination of the vessel, then on the stocks at Amsterdam, from a chance sight of some papers lying on the desk of M. Dumas, secretly employed as American agent at the Dutch capital. To prevent the confiscation of the vessel in a neutral port it was deemed imperative immediately to transfer it to the French Government. Jones had no intention of giving up his efforts to get the command of the ship, but he realized that there was nothing to be done for the moment, so he wasted no time in remonstrances, and returned after a few days to Nantes to resume his command of the *Ranger*. His ensuing correspondence shows that the relations he had so quickly formed at Passy included a warm and sympathetic friendship with at least two of the commissioners and with Doctor Bancroft, an Englishman officially employed by the latter, and eminent for his scientific discoveries. The letters of Silas Deane written to Jones at this period abound in expressions of admiration and a desire to further his designs—letters which indicate not only the ardent nature of this unfortunate public servant, but the engaging personality of his correspondent. Deane had been from the first an active and influential member of the Continental Congress and also a member of the first marine committee. He was ap-

pointed business agent and American commissioner at Paris in June, 1776, and filled that arduous position alone from July until December of that year, when Franklin arrived to be associated with him. Although he had embarrassed the government by his too easy belief in the representations of the French officers who desired to enter the American army, he had been eminently successful in the conduct of the very complicated matter of procuring supplies through Beaumarchais, which were absolutely essential to the prosecution of the war. He is described as being a man of distinguished manners and appearance, used to the world, and, through his warm personal relations with Beaumarchais, favorably known to the powerful French minister of foreign affairs, the Count de Vergennes. Arthur Lee, as a member of the influential and patriotic Lee family, of Virginia, was closely related to Washington and was also in strong sympathy with Adams and the New England party in Congress. He resented a subordinate position, or even the divided authority which was forced upon him by the presence of his colleagues in France, and refused to subscribe either to the diplomacy of Franklin or the conduct of the business affairs by Deane. He failed, although with a very small majority, in Congress, in his attempt to oust Franklin from his position, but was only too successful in his attacks upon Deane. No sooner had he arrived in Paris than he sent the most sweeping and, as it was proved, unfounded accusations to Congress as to Deane's dishonesty, with the result that Deane's bills were dishonored by his government and he was left



penniless in Europe. In this emergency, through the earnest persuasions of Beaumarchais, Vergennes supplied Deane's immediate necessities from the French exchequer and sent him home to his trial in America with honors from the King. In spite of the recommendations of Franklin, who clearly testified to his integrity, Lee's suspicions prevailed with Congress, and when Deane finally appeared in Philadelphia it was only to be sent away shorn of the rewards he had merited for his services to America and of every dollar he possessed. Not the least of the political crimes which lie at the door of Arthur Lee was the undeserved persecution which drove this zealous patriot to penury and to the despair from which his subsequent treachery to his country originated.

The first letter in regard to Jones, which emanates from Passy after his visit, is addressed to Jonathan Williams, and directs him to advance Jones the sum of five hundred "Loudores," for which his draft upon the commissioners will be paid. This letter, although signed by the three commissioners, is in the handwriting of Arthur Lee, and represents the only evidence of confidence in Jones for which he was responsible.

Another short official document belonging to this period gives a record of the sale of the *Ranger's* prizes, negotiated by Williams, on the reverse side of which is a note in Jones's handwriting, stating that it is the only account of sales ever received from any agent. This evidence of Williams's business integrity is less remarkable than the inference it contains in regard to the other prize-agents employed in the sale of the

many prizes Jones captured, not only in Europe, but in American waters, during the Revolutionary War. Both Jones and Williams were soon to be sharers in Lee's universal suspicion, and the statement of Jones is therefore significant.

Jones now turned his attention to the cruise he was planning to make in the *Ranger*, and, to his great satisfaction, he received on the 15th day of January a letter from the commissioners promising the rewards which he had already requested for his officers and crew, in case the expedition should prove successful. On January 16 his full instructions were sent to him.

PARIS, *January 16th*, 1778.

CAPT. JONES,

*Sir.*

As it is not in our Power to procure you such a Ship as you expected, we advise you after equipping the *Ranger* in the best manner, for the Cruise you propose, that you proceed with her in the manner you shall judge best, for distressing the Enemies of the United States, by Sea, or otherwise, consistent with the Laws of War, and the Terms of your Commission. If you take Prizes on the Coast of France or Spain, send them into *Bilboa* or *Corogne*, unless you should apprehend the Danger too great; in which Case, we advise you to send them either into *L'Orient*, or *Bordeaux*, directing the Officers who may have them in charge to apply at *L'Orient* to Mr. Moylan or Mr. Gourlade, and at *Bordeaux* to Messrs. S. & J. T. Delaps, and inform us immediately of their arrival, and Situation; if you send to Spain, or should put into the Ports of that Kingdom apply at *Bilboa* to Messrs. *Gadroque, et fils*, at *Corogne* to Messrs. *Loganière & Co.* if you make

an attempt on the Coasts of Great Britain, we advise you not to return immediately into the Ports of France, unless forced by the stress of weather, or the pursuit of the Enemy, and in such Case, you can make the proper Representation to the Officers of the Port and acquaint us with your Situation; We rely on your Ability, as well as your Zeal, to serve the United States, and therefore do not give particular instructions as to your Operations. We must caution you against giving any cause for complaint, to the Subjects of France, or Spain, or of other Neutral Powers, and recommend it to you to show them every proper mark of Respect and real Civility which may be in your Power. You will communicate to your Officers and Seamen the encouragement we give them, and explain to them that tho' it was not in our Power to be particular as to the Rewards they should be entitled to, yet they may safely Rely on the Justice of the Congress.

Before you sail it will be proper to settle with Mr. Williams the Account of your Disbursements and send the Account up to us.

We most heartily wish you Success and are with much Esteem,

Sir Your most obed. & very humble Servants

B. FRANKLIN

SILAS DEANE.

These instructions, unlimited as to plan and destination, were such as were calculated to please Jones best, but they were signed by only two of the commissioners, for Arthur Lee, already beginning to make trouble for Jones, had written on the back that he doubted the integrity of the prize-agent at L'Orient recommended by his confrères, and held that

American agents appointed directly by Congress should be trusted with the business.

This example of the obstructionist character of Lee's actions, based on a pretended obedience to the letter of the varying laws of the far-distant Congress, is highly characteristic of his subsequent course, and caused in this, as in every other instance, incalculable difficulty to those who, with greater wisdom, were endeavoring to follow, in the rapidly changing course of events, the spirit rather than the letter of their government's instructions.

A new and accelerated movement was now about to take place in European affairs owing to the news of Burgoyne's surrender, which not only raised the hopes of the commissioners but most importantly altered the hesitating attitude of the French court in regard to the American cause, the almost immediate result being the resolution to adopt a commercial treaty of alliance between France and the United States. This all-important step was not determined upon without long and careful deliberation by the French ministers. As far back as the reign of Choiseul, the wisdom of a sympathetic attitude toward the colonies was recommended to the French court. Individual liberty was promulgated by Voltaire, social liberty by Rousseau. Liberty was the favorite theme of the Encyclopedists; it became the passion of the young nobles of the court, which was already unconsciously republican, with an ironical tragedy, working soon to its destruction. A veritable rage for the new ideas spread rapidly and dangerously among the people; the press was full of

“anecdotes Américaines,” school-children were fed on Poor Richard’s maxims, and Franklin himself had a translation made of the States’ constitutions, which circulated freely with amazing results. The Comte de Vergennes attempted to control the popular excitement by forbidding the crowds in the cafés to discuss the affairs of the American revolutionists, but the voice of the people already sounded loud in the corridors of Versailles, and the monarchical minister and the King himself were forced to yield to the pressure. Not without long and careful balancing of arguments and possibilities was the treaty decided upon. The memorials on the subject of the American alliance from the pens of Turgot, who opposed it, and of the astute Vergennes, who finally favored it, perpetuate the profound and careful reflections these great French statesmen had perfected. Vergennes, who desired, above all things, the preservation of the monarchy and who was devotedly attached to Louis XVI, was in no wise inclined to yield to the popular enthusiasm, but he did intend to weaken the power of Great Britain by any means in his command. He had large schemes for restoring the ancient power of France by a net-work of treaties with European powers, and had long been contemplating a treaty of commercial alliance with the new nation, to go into force as soon as it seemed probable that her independence was likely to become an established fact. For this reason he had furthered the semi-mercantile but wholly enthusiastic schemes of Beaumarchais for the assistance of the colonists. With infinite patience and the

exercise of his accomplished diplomacy, he had managed to lead the reluctant King of Spain, with the aid of the Marquis de Grimaldi, who favored the idea of humiliating England, to the very point of declaring war against their common enemy. Working upon the Spanish King's resentment at the secret encouragement furnished to Portugal by the British cabinet, in their hostile threats against his country's supremacy in the Spanish Peninsula, he represented that the Spanish as well as the French possessions in the New World were in imminent danger of being seized by the English, and that war was a necessity from which there was no escape. The Spanish cabinet had so far yielded to Vergennes's persuasion that it had joined with the French ministry in the first loan of two million livres, which was accorded to the American colonies through the negotiations of Beaumarchais. The formal consent to this proposal was sent on the 27th of June, 1776.<sup>1</sup>

When the news of the Declaration of Independence reached France, Vergennes came to the conclusion that the Revolution was as serious as he had hoped and likely to be fought out to the bitter end. He therefore, with the consent of Louis XVI and his council, formally proposed to the Spanish cabinet that war should be declared by their respective sovereigns against England. The consent of Spain, on condition that she should be permitted immediately to invade Portugal, had just been received, when the news

<sup>1</sup> "Espagne," t. 580, no. 193, vol. I, 485: "Participation de la France dans l'Etablissement des Etats Unis," Doniol.

great a degree of frankness as the conditions permitted, and by a courtesy as invariable as it was respectful. It was the natural result of high intelligence, deliberate reflection, and mutual confidence in each other's integrity. Arthur Lee was suspected by Vergennes, and John Adams's truculent independence was equally repugnant to the suave but exceedingly powerful French minister, who finally refused to treat with him, or with any other of the many colonial agents who were unwisely sent with roving commissions to the various European courts.

When this first French treaty was signed, Arthur Lee and Deane, still vested with the powers of commissioners, were present at all the interviews which led to its adoption, but Franklin was the only one who was seriously considered by the French court, and, as events compelled, was eventually relieved by Congress of the embarrassment of divided authority. Allied as he was thus closely with Vergennes and the King, through their unfaltering confidence in his ability, Franklin began to plan expeditions in which the American forces and those of the allies could be used in conjunction. Following out this idea, he attempted on various occasions to bring Jones into association with the distinguished French volunteers who had offered their services to the cause of the colonies. A letter from Silas Deane, written to Jones the day after the signing of the treaty, makes reference to a plan proposed, after Jones's visit to Paris, to bring him into personal communication with Lafayette. Jones asked, and received permission, to join the con-

voy of American vessels awaited by La Motte Picquet in Quiberon Bay and destined to accompany Lafayette as far as Cape Finisterre on his return voyage across the ocean. This plan was subsequently altered but its intent is plain.

A few days after Jones's return to Nantes, while he was still waiting for the completion of the alterations of the *Ranger*, he received news by a Nantucket privateer in regard to the situation of the British forces in America of so encouraging a character as to set his inventive mind immediately to work. He instantly conceived a bold plan for an immediate invasion of America by a fleet to be assembled from the forces of the allies, which, as he calculated, would bring the whole contest to a speedy conclusion. For some reason, possibly because of the hasty manner in which it was prepared and sent off hot-foot to the commissioners on the very day Jones received the news from America, he preserved no copy of this important paper. There existed no trace of it in the large collection of his papers left to his family at his death, or of those left by Jones in America, which formed the basis of Sherburne's biography, and were finally acquired by Congress in the year 1867. Separately preserved, however, for upward of a century among the Continental Congress papers in the archives of the State Department, this very important document has finally come to light. It may have found its way thither through its inclusion in the Franklin papers, part of which came into the possession of Congress, or Jones himself may have procured a copy from Franklin for presenta-



tion to the government at the time of his long and triumphant examination by Congress in the year 1781.

The importance of this paper is very great in any consideration of the character and career of Paul Jones, not only because it clears him from the suspicion of having wrongfully laid claim to the authorship of the plan of invasion, but because it establishes his ability to conceive a great scheme of naval operations which, to the incalculable loss to America, he was never given the opportunity of conducting. In his journal, written in the year 1787 for Louis XVI, Jones gives in elaborate detail the completed plan of the proposed expedition, and states that he sent it to Silas Deane, who claimed it as his own and laid it before the French court. Silas Deane was rewarded for this service by the gift of a miniature of Louis XVI. This letter, then, as it is here appended, containing the brief but perfectly clear outline of the plan, must have been temporarily sequestered by Deane, who seized the credit himself. It is addressed plainly to the three commissioners:

*Ranger, PAIMBOEUF, 10th Feby. 1778.*

GENTLEMEN:—

I had the honor of writing to you from Nantes the 27th Ulto.—the affair of *Quiberon*, which I did not then know of, is now in every Brokers Mouth.—Strange! that nothing can remain secret?—Should I then find *that force* likely to depart within a few days I will avail myself of its protection—especially as it is the general opinion that I can be of service to the supply ships—however, unless something is determined very soon I shall depart alone.

I heartily congratulate you on the pleasing News contained in the within paper which I believe may be entirely depended upon as the informant appears to me to be very intelligent and well affected to America.

2. Were any Continental marine power in Europe disposed to avail of the present situation of affairs in America and willing to deserve our Friendship, a single Blow well directed would now do the needful.—Ten or Twelve sail of the line with Frigates well equipped and provided would give a good account of the Fleet under Lord Howe—for as that force would be Superior to any of Howe's divisions—the strongest being once taken—the Victorious Squadron might sail in quest of the next in strength and reach it before advice.—I know the genius of the English seamen (having lived long on salt provision) would induce them to enter on the Strongest side where they would find better food—the American Seamen would enter, of course, and in all probability many of the officers would Pull off the Mask and declare in favor of Heaven and America.—Small squadrons might then be formed, to secure the coast and cut off the Enemies supplies while our army Settled the Account current.—

3. However extravagant this calculation may appear on a slight view—it will not be found so in reality.—

Had Lord Howe or any commander in the Enemies Fleet an Idea or expectation of such a Visit—it is certain that the attempt would be folly and madness—but as our Enemies Ride in perfect security—that security would prove their Ruin and insure our Success. Whoever can surprise well must Conquer.

I have the honor to be with sentiments of esteem and great respect, etc.

J. P. JONES.

The Honble. B. Franklin, Silas Deane and A. Lee, Esqrs.  
American Commissioners &c. Paris.

In the following extract taken from Jones's journal he tells how he was deprived of the credit of this conception:

As I had received from America on the 10th of February, information in regard to the forces and the location of the frigates and men-of-war under Lord Howe, I wrote on the same day to Deane, one of the French Ministers in Paris, to communicate to him the plans and details of an expedition to be conducted in America with only one squadron and ten ships of the line with some frigates and troops, with the object of entirely destroying the forces of England in the United States before they had time to send to England for reinforcements. France had then afloat thirty ships of the line, as well as a number of frigates, fully equipped and ready for service. There never had been, and there was no prospect of there being again, so wonderful an opportunity of striking an overwhelming blow at the English Navy. If the plan of the expedition had been adopted without delay, and a squadron despatched from Brest, Great Britain would have had no knowledge of this destructive project until after it had been carried out in America. Lord Howe would have been surprised and captured in the Delaware; his squadron would have immediately been armed from American forces, and separating in small detachments to left and right, the naval forces of England would have been completely destroyed before the arrival of Admiral Byron. The resulting enthusiasm of the Americans would have so supported General Washington that he would have taken New York, and captured or destroyed all the English regiments in the United States.

At the same time, the French squadron, raising the English flag off the Harbour of New York, would have

lured into the trap and taken Admiral Byron, and following that, all of his squadron, whose vessels, separated by storm during the passage, arrived one after the other in New York. Thus, in a single campaign, with little expense, France would have had an admirable opportunity of establishing the Independence of America, and with a single blow to bring Great Britain to her feet, thereafter to abandon her boast of being "Mistress of the seas." What will be the opinion of posterity regarding France's long neglect of this unique opportunity? Will it not judge that this fault was only increased by the adoption of the project three months later, when the time had passed, by sending the squadron from Toulon instead of from Brest, and causing a delay of at least another month? It is useless to add to the narrative of these details the unhappy effects which were caused by this delay, the general result of which was a long, bloody and costly war in which France, Holland, Spain and the East Indies were afterwards embroiled.

When Deane presented to the Court of France the plan of the expedition which I had conceived, he had the bad faith to claim the honor of its invention for himself, and received in consequence the portrait of His Majesty on a box ornamented with diamonds.

A comparison of these two documents will prove, without question, the identity of the ideas and authorship, and justify the authoritative and deliberate judgment of Captain Mahan, expressed in the following conclusion:

The comprehensive professional intelligence, combined with daring in enterprise, and endurance in action, shown by Jones, give the best antecedent tokens of the great general officer that might have been.

Although rewarded by the gift of the portrait of the King, Silas Deane, on the eve of his recall, did not bring about the immediate adoption of the plan of invasion which Jones had so hastily and urgently recommended. But when Count d'Orvilliers, then admiral of the French fleet assembled at Brest, heard of the plan from Jones himself a few weeks later, the project was again put in motion. D'Orvilliers, then and always in perfect accord with Jones, approved the plan and enclosed a copy of it to M. de Sartine, the minister of marine, with a letter recommending its immediate adoption. With the added authority of this advice the plan was adopted and eventually put into operation. How the expedition, under Count d'Estaing, failed of success is a matter of history, but it is highly probable, if the French fleet had started at the time when Jones proposed it and had followed out his plan, the war would have then and there been brought to an end. On March 31, in a letter to the French minister of marine, Jones again makes mention of this plan, and in a still subsequent letter to him insists that "had Count D'Estaing arrived in the Delaware a few days sooner he might have made a glorious and easy conquest."

There is a forgotten piece of testimony in regard to this ill-fated expedition in the form of a letter from Jones, hidden away, in the finest of print, in the appendix of Miss Taylor's rare compilation of her uncle's papers of the year 1830. It is a curious and interesting fragment. The letter is without date and lacks an address, but, according to the authority of the editor, it

is an authentic letter in Jones's own handwriting and bears his signature. It is well known that, owing to the ill-advised policy of the French Government, Count d'Estaing's fleet was ordered to start from Toulon instead of from Brest, and sailing finally on April the 13th, two months after Jones had proposed the expedition, wasted still another month in getting into the Atlantic. Contrary winds still more delayed the fleet, and it was not until July the 8th that it appeared before the mouth of the Delaware, just too late to intercept the little British squadron, which had left the river a few days earlier, when Howe evacuated Philadelphia. Washington sent his aides, Hamilton and Laurens, out to Sandy Hook when the fleet arrived off the entrance of New York Bay, where they held a council of war with the French admiral. Hamilton had brought pilots with him to conduct the vessels through the channel, but neither his pilots nor those D'Estaing had brought with him from the Delaware would venture to take the larger ships across the bar. In despair, D'Estaing jumped into a small boat to try and reconnoitre the passage for himself, with no success. Arguments and inducements alike proved fruitless, and so the little English squadron remained safely in the harbor while the great French fleet lay helpless without, and this through ignorance which seems strange, indeed, and incredible in these latter days. How bitterly and how long D'Estaing felt this failure is vividly told by Jones.

"Count D'Estaing"—he writes curiously in this forgotten letter—"the King never had a subject who

loved him better, and who is a more worthy citizen. I gave the plan the 10th of February 1778. That long and unnecessary delay rendered it scarcely possible for the expedition to succeed. This was no fault of the Admiral. He would have surmounted every difficulty, and taken Lord Howe in the road of New York, if a generous sacrifice of his own fortune 150,000 livres, could have induced the pilot to conduct him over the bar."

The letter, too long to quote in its entirety, breathes the atmosphere of an intimate and even recent conversation with D'Estaing himself, and might well remain as an apology not only for the conduct of the French commander on this unsuccessful expedition, but for his character and entire career.

Jones had now completed the alterations of the *Ranger* and was again ready for sea. Leaving Nantes on the 12th of February, with Jonathan Williams and brother aboard, he arrived off Quiberon Bay the following morning. He bore the flag of a new nation and was determined that it should be recognized by the admiral of the French squadron at Quiberon. He immediately sent in his boat to demand a salute for the stars and stripes from the French commander. How he obtained this first recognition of American independence through this first salute to the nation's flag is related in his own words in a naturally jubilant account to the marine committee:

I am happy in having it in my power to congratulate you on my having seen the American Flag for the first time recognized in the fullest and amplest

manner by the Flag of France. The Brig *Independence* accepted of my convoy from Nantes to this place; I was off the Bay the 13th, and sent in my boat to know if the Admiral would return my salute. He answered that he would return to me as the Senior American Continental Officer in Europe the same salute which he was authorized by his Court to return to an Admiral of Holland, or of any other Republic, which was Four Guns less than the salute given. I hesitated at this, for I had demanded gun for gun, but after a very particular inquiry, on the 14th, finding that he had really told the truth, I was induced to accept of his offer; the more so as it was in fact an acknowledgment of America's independence. The wind being contrary and blowing hard, it was after sunset before the *Ranger* got near enough to salute La Motte Picquet with 13 guns, which he returned with 9. However, to put the matter beyond a doubt I did not suffer the *Independence* to salute till next morning, when I sent word to the Admiral that I should sail through his fleet in the Brig, and would salute him in open day. He was exceedingly pleased and returned the compliment also with 9 guns.

Elsewhere Jones states, with an inference very expressive of the courage of the French commander and his enthusiasm for the cause of America, that "Neither he nor La Motte Picquet had at this time any knowledge that the Treaty with France had been signed."

The act of recognizing the American flag was, as a matter of fact, the virtual as it was the first acknowledgment of American independence by France. That this gallant officer experienced some pleasure in the interesting act of acknowledging for the first time the



independence of America is pleasantly inferred by Jones's assurance that he "was exceedingly pleased at the compliment."

It is interesting to recall that the man who thus gladly and promptly acknowledged our national existence was scarcely less distinguished for services to his country than the young commander who demanded it. It is interesting also to remember that the first laurels of La Motte Picquet's career were won in fighting for America's independence. Enthusiasm for the new nation, and for the cause of human liberty it represented, was evidently as prevalent among the young and highly born officers of the French navy as among the soldiers who were so eagerly offering their services to our army. It will be remembered, also, that no officers were accepted at this time in the French navy who could not prove their noble descent. Here, then, was an atmosphere which exactly suited Paul Jones, and where indeed his charming manners and his enthusiastic ideals found a warm welcome and appreciation. He expressed his satisfaction in his report to the marine committee:

This squadron is officered by a very well bred set of men. They have all visited the *Ranger* and expressed great satisfaction, calling her a "parfait bijou." When Mr. Carmichael and myself visited their ships, we were received with every mark of respect and gladness, and saluted with a feu de joie.

Another extract hints at the manner in which he was intending to execute the unlimited orders of the commissioners.

I have in contemplation several enterprises of importance, where an enemy thinks a design against him improbable, he can always be surprised and attacked with advantage. It is true I must run great risk, but no gallant action was ever accomplished without danger; therefore, "although I cannot ensure success, I will endeavor to deserve it."

Writing again on the same day to the marine committee to express the gratitude which filled his heart at the recollection of the flattering terms they had used in regard to him in their letter of recommendation to the commissioners, he took occasion to send them a patriotic ode indited by some French enthusiast of the American cause, and recommends the author to the attention of Congress.

This somewhat sentimental proceeding, although probably not unsympathetic to the grave forefathers of our Congress, who were themselves prone to express their feelings in quotations from the poets, is highly indicative of the exhilaration of Jones's emotions at this time. The first accredited standard-bearer of a new nation, he was received with the most flattering attentions from the "well-bred" officers of the French fleet. His glory-loving soul basked in its proper atmosphere, and the laudatory phrases of Congress rang harmoniously in his ears.

His correspondence indicates the warm and affectionate intimacy which already existed between his American associates and himself, and abounds in references to frequent meetings with the French officers. The flattering reception he received at Quiberon was

repeated at Brest, whither he repaired on the 3d of March, waiting without at Cammeret, as he relates in his journal to Louis XVI, until the French ambassador at London had formally announced the treaty between his country and America. On the 23d of March he entered the harbor and received again the salute to his flag from Admiral Count d'Orvilliers, in command of the French fleet. It was not until a month later that the action of these two commanders in formally recognizing the American flag was authorized by their government. On the 27th, Sartine wrote to L'Avigne Buisson, at Brest, sending him instructions to that effect.

A week later, on the 31st of March, Jones wrote for the first time to the minister of the French marine. This letter was the first of a long and voluminous correspondence between Jones and Sartine, which he wrote with the evident permission of Count d'Orvilliers, furnishing another characteristic example of his methods of making valuable relations with those in power:

*Ranger, BREST, March 31st, 1778.*

M. DE SARTINE, *Minister and Secretary of* {  
*State for the Marine Department* }

*Honored Sir:—*

As I have not the honor of being known to you, I hope you will pardon the liberty I take of enclosing the copy of a letter from the Secret Committee of Congress to the American Commissioners in Europe. I must, however, acknowledge that the generous praise which is therein bestowed on me by Congress, far exceeds the merits of my services.

My reason for laying this matter before you is, because I am destined by Congress to command a frigate

of a very large construction lately built at Amsterdam, —and as political reasons made it necessary for that frigate to become French property, I am now induced to hope that on her arrival in France, she will again become the property of America, and of course, be put under my command.

The within extract of a letter dated 10th Feb. last, to the American Commissioners will, I hope, prove to you the real satisfaction with which I have anticipated the happy alliance between France and America.—I am, sir, convinced that the capture of Lord Howe's light ships and frigates in America, and the destruction of the enemy's fishery at Newfoundland, which might easily be effected this summer, would effectually destroy the sinews of their Marine, for they would afterward be unable to man their fleet; and as to their army in America, that must fall of course.

I should be ungrateful did I forget to acknowledge the polite attentions and favors which I have received from Comte d'Orvilliers, M. De la Porse, M. la Motte Picquet, and every officer in this place.

The Admiral d'Orvilliers has, I doubt not, communicated to you a project of mine. I am, sir, ambitious of being employed in active and enterprising services;—but my ship is of too small a force, and does not sail so fast as I could wish. If I am successful I will return to France, and hope for your countenance and protection.

I have addressed you, sir, with the same freedom which has ever marked my correspondence with Congress. The interests of France and America are the same; and as I hope to see the common enemy humbled, I shall be happy if I can furnish any hint whereby that even can be effected. Meantime,

I have the honor to be

With profound respect &c.

Jones had every reason to be satisfied with his experience at Brest, for Count d'Orvilliers received him with every mark of confidence and esteem, and invited him constantly to his table. With the long experience of an old commander he recognized at once that he had to do with a man of remarkable ability, possessing that rarest of qualities, an imaginative constructive brain. He not only introduced him to M. de Sartine, but instantly recognized the value of Jones's plan for Count d'Estaing's expedition and, as has been seen, recommended it to his court. He went further than La Motte Picquet in his recognition of the flag of America, for he returned eleven guns instead of nine to the thirteen guns of the *Ranger*. He assured Jones that his letter to M. de Sartine would procure him the eagerly coveted command of the *Indien*, and recommended the intendant of the port, M. de la Porte, to man the vessel, with the result that Jones was promised four hundred French seamen to make up his crew. The *Indien* had finally been completed and launched at Amsterdam, and Jones had every expectation of finding her waiting for him at Brest upon his return from his cruise in the little *Ranger*. Having secured D'Orvillier's French ship *Fortuna* as a consort, he wrote to the commissioners, on the 4th of April, that he was ready to sail, saying also that they might rest assured "that I shall leave nothing unattempted that can be expected from the small force under my command. The time which has been lost gives me the deepest concern, but I know of no other remedy than to make the better use of that to come."

On the 9th he was still at Brest. "We have been out," he wrote to his friend John Ross, "but obliged to put back, not being able to weather Ushant." His spirits were high and impatient, and expressed with a certain youthful ardor of feeling which creeps with refreshing interest into the official pages of his reports. "The world, as Milton said of Adam, lays all before me," he writes again to Ross, and to Silas Deane he declares: "If I meet with much Game, I may continue the sport three months." He wrote affectionate farewells to Jonathan Williams and "all friends at Nantes," and thus, confident and happy in the prospect of immediate action, he set sail on April the 10th for the first of those descents upon the British coasts which were destined to prove the wisdom as well as the daring of his conceptions.

## CHAPTER X

### THE "RANGER" CRUISE

IN issuing "unlimited" orders to Jones, the commissioners followed the example of the marine committee, and must have had no little satisfaction in thus relieving themselves of any personal responsibility for his possible failure. Their experience in conducting what was among many other offices a "naval bureau" in Europe, had been marked with difficulties and disasters. Nothing better exemplifies the temper of the Americans in this war than the fact that it was carried boldly into European waters and that expeditions and depredations against the coasts of England, her commerce, and her ships, should have been attempted with the absurdly small forces at the command of the commissioners. Silas Deane, while sole agent of the colonies in Europe, had been occupied with a zeal and activity which should not be forgotten in the purchase and building of the Continental cruisers which were destined for this hazardous service. Franklin himself, when called upon to share the responsibility of conducting this part of the war, was by no means backward in devising schemes of harassing the enemy, although not conspicuously experienced in the knowledge or management of naval affairs. The plans he suggested in numerous letters to Congress, prior to Jones's arrival, with their daring guesses at what a more professional

executant was about to attempt, illuminate another province in his wellnigh boundless capacity. He declared that he had not "the least doubt but that two or three of the continental frigates might intercept and seize the great part of the Baltic and northern trade, and that one frigate would be sufficient to destroy the whole of the Greenland whale fishery and take the Hudson's Bay ships returning."

In carrying out this policy of aggressive warfare the captains of the American cruisers had met with some success, but several serious disasters. Lambert Wickes, who brought Franklin to Europe in the *Reprisal*, had sailed alone all around the British islands in his little vessel, capturing many British ships unaided until joined by Captain H. Johnston in the *Lexington*, when they made several successful cruises together; but when Wickes took refuge in French ports to refit and to sell his captured vessels he had been peremptorily ordered out by the French Government. Franklin attempted to evade what he perfectly realized to be a breach of international law by ordering Wickes to moor his vessels somewhere in the "offing," contiguous to the ports, and there secretly to sell his prizes; but the proceeding was fraught with danger to the invaluable although yet unavowed friendship of France, and Wickes was finally sent away from European waters and was lost at sea, off the coast of Nova Scotia, going down with the little vessel in which he had done such valiant and useful service. The *Lexington* was captured, and her crew, including Richard Dale, were thrown into prison in England. Gustavus Conyng-



ham, almost as celebrated as Paul Jones himself for the audacity of his cruises in the British Channel, had been appointed captain of a secretly armed cruiser sailing as a merchantman, and in accomplishing the feat of capturing the Harwich packet which plied between England and Holland he created the wildest excitement and alarm in England. Unwisely, however, he turned back with his prize into the open port of Dunkirk, that very French port which had been shorn of its batteries and put under English surveillance during the late humiliating conflict between France and England. The English authorities complained loudly and with perfect reason, with the result that the prizes were given up to the enemy, and Conyngham and his crew thrown into jail at Dunkirk. No sooner was Conyngham released by the complaisant intendant of the port than he sailed on another daring predatory raid, but was again captured, and this time cast into a British military prison, where, in a dungeon and in fetters, he was subjected as a rebel to the most brutal treatment.

Paul Jones was now about to risk these dangers, with an ardor undiminished by disaster. Although given a free hand by the commissioners, he was destined to discover that his officers were by no means ready to support him. Several reasons existed for this. In the first place, it was well understood by both officers and crew that Jones had been promised command of the *Indien* upon his arrival in Europe, and Lieutenant Simpson, expecting to assume the command of the *Ranger* as soon as Jones should have crossed the Atlantic, considered himself already her captain, and had

imbued the crew of New Englanders with this idea. The new notions of republican independence were also strongly prevalent among them, and they declared that their opinions, as representing the voice of the people on this American vessel, should prevail even over those of their commander. They were none of them sympathetic with Jones's daring schemes of warfare. Some of them confessed "they had no turn for enterprise," and all were infected with the singular greed for gain which privateering had bred in American seamen, to the detriment of the government service. Jones well understood the unheroic temper of his crew, and having himself advanced a portion of their wages to induce them to sail in a ship of war, he now stipulated with the commissioners for rewards to insure contentment and proper co-operation. Their gratitude for his generosity took the usual form of expectation of future favors and bound them in sympathy not to their commander and benefactor, but to each other in a common disposition to criticism and insubordination. Such was the mettle of the crew which Jones had to depend on for aid and support in the execution of his plans. Their aversion to anything which smacked of adventure brought about the entire failure of some of his projects, and only sleepless vigilance and unyielding determination enabled him to prevail against their opposition to his wishes. He relates that his anxiety was so keen that he remained practically sleepless during the whole of this cruise, snatching a few hours only when a momentary halt in the prosecution of his daring schemes permitted him to repose.

The best account of his adventures is contained in his own detailed report, sent to the commissioners a fortnight after the completion of the cruise:

"I sailed from Brest," he wrote, "on April 10th. My plan was extensive. I therefore did not at the beginning wish to encumber myself with prisoners. On the 14th I took a Brigatine between Scylla and Cape Clear bound for Ostend with a cargo of flaxseed for Ireland, sunk her, and proceeded into St. George's Channel. On the 17th I took the ship *Lord Chatham* with a cargo of porter and a variety of merchandise and almost within sight of her port. The ship I manned and ordered for Brest."

On the next day toward nightfall the *Ranger* was off the Isle of Man, and the weather being fair and the winds favorable, he steered his course toward the town of Whitehaven. Out of this port, which was situated on the southern side of the Firth of Forth, directly opposite to his Scottish home in Arbigland, he had sailed as a boy and every feature of the town and shore was familiar to him. It is impossible not to be struck by the fact that Jones chose this spot for the purpose of dealing out a just retaliation for the wanton destruction practised by the English on the American coasts; but his former familiarity not only with the locality, but also with the unsuspecting temper of the inhabitants, was unquestionably the reason which influenced him in his choice. On the evening of the 18th he was at the entrance of the harbor, his boats manned and ready to start; but before eleven the wind suddenly shifted and greatly increased, blowing directly

inshore, and raising such a sea as to make a landing impossible. Jones was now in the greatest danger of losing his ship, for he had approached so near that he was forced to crowd on all sail to escape from being dashed upon the rocks. He succeeded, however, in avoiding this danger, and getting away to sea to await another and more favorable opportunity.

On the 18th, in Glenbue Bay, off the southern coast of Scotland, he met a revenue wherry which he anticipated would engage his apparently unarmed ship, but in this he was mistaken, for the wherry outsailed the *Ranger* and made her escape. The next morning off the Mull of Galloway, he found himself near a Scotch coasting schooner, and in spite of the risk of exposing the true character of the *Ranger* he relates characteristically that "he could not avoid sinking her." A rumor of the presence of a fleet of ten or twelve merchantmen at anchor in Loughryan Bay tempted him to a descent upon that place, but a hard squall arising again intervened to protect the Scottish coast, and deterred him from his intention. He chased a cutter steering for the Clyde, this also ineffectually; but sunk a sloop from Dublin to prevent her from giving information of his presence in those waters. On the 20th, off Carrickfergus, a fishing-boat boarded the *Ranger* and from her crew, whom Jones detained on finding they were pilots, he received the welcome news that a ship he perceived at anchor in Belfast Lough was the British sloop-of-war *Drake*, of twenty guns. He immediately formed a plan of attacking her during the night by an exceedingly brilliant manœuvre,

which failed only through the incapacity of his subordinates.

"My plan," he said, "was to overlay her cable and to fall upon her bow, so as to have all her decks exposed to our musketry, etc. At the same time it was my intention to have secured the enemy by grappling, so that, had they cut their cables, they would not thereby have gained an advantage. The wind was high and unfortunately the anchor was not let go so soon as the order was given, so that the *Ranger* was brought up on the enemy's quarter, at the distance of half a cables length. We had made no warlike appearance, of course, had given no alarm; this determined me to cut immediately, which might appear as if the cable had parted, and at the same time enabling me, after making attack out of the Lough, to return, with the same prospect of advantage which I had at the first."

But the wind once more interfered, increasing to a gale, before which the *Ranger* drove, barely escaping the light-house rocks, and this protecting gale continued with a stormy sea until the morning of the 22d, when, as Jones writes again, with a youthful hint of pleasure and excitement: "The weather was once more fair, though the three kingdoms, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with snow."

Again the Whitehaven plan came uppermost in his mind, and with great difficulty he managed to persuade a party of thirty-one men to make the descent. At midnight, having waited again for the capricious wind, which had so often foiled his projects, he left the ship

at last, with two boat-loads, with the intention of setting fire to the shipping in the port. He commanded the first boat himself, leaving the other to Lieutenant Wallingsford. The tide was running ebb, so that as he writes:

When we reached the outer pier the day began to dawn. I would not, however, abandon my enterprise, but despatched one boat under the direction of Mr. Hill and Lieutenant Wallingsford, with the necessary combustibles in the North side of the harbor, while I went with the other party to attempt the South side.

The two docks lay parallel to each other, divided only by a stone pier, and the task which Jones confided to his officers should not have been difficult of accomplishment. After the issuing of these orders he considered it necessary to disarm the batteries of the two forts, which guarded the entrance of the harbor, so as to insure the safe retirement of his party after the attack. With this idea in view he left several of his own boat's crew to make all in readiness to fire the shipping in the southern basin upon his return, and with the others he rowed out to the strip of shore which lay under the walls of the northern fort. With no scaling-ladders their only way of entering the fort was to mount upon each other's shoulders, when they climbed in through the embrasures, Jones himself in the lead, and found everything silent and deserted, and all the sentinels soundly asleep in the guard-house. This was precisely what Jones had expected and counted upon, and he relates with satisfaction that he "secured them all un-

harméd." It was now fairly daylight, and haste was imperative. He spiked all the guns and left his own men on guard, taking one man only (Mr. Green), to accompany him to the southern fort, where he also spiked all the guns without trouble or resistance.

"On my return from this business," he says, "I naturally expected to see the fire of the ships on the North side as well as to find my own party with everything in readiness. Instead of this, I found a boat under the direction of Mr. Hill and Lieut. Wallingsford returned, and the party in some confusion, their light having gone out at the instant it became necessary, and by the strangest fatality, my own party was in the same situation. The day, too, had come on apace, yet I would by no means retreat, while any hopes of success remained."

Jones now placed sentinels, and having again procured a light from a lonely house far away from the town, he kindled at last, with his own hands, a fire in the steerage of a large ship which the tide had left stranded, and which was surrounded by a number of other vessels all aground, and lying closely side by side. There was no time to kindle other fires, barely enough to feed the one already lighted by adding the contents of a tar barrel found after considerable difficulty.

"The inhabitants now began to appear in thousands," Jones continues, "and individuals ran hastily toward us. I stood between them and the ship on fire, with a pistol in my hand, and ordered them to retire, which they did with precipitation. The flames had

already caught the rigging and began to ascend the mainmast; the sun was a full hours march above the horizon and as sleep no longer ruled the world, it was time to retire."

Again the note of youthful ardor creeps into the recital of this daring exploit, which is repeated in his following description of the moment when he stood alone on the pier, surveying with imperturbable coolness the scene of awe and consternation which he had created.

After all my people had embarked, I stood alone upon the pier for a considerable time, yet no person advanced. I saw all the eminences around the town covered with the amazed inhabitants. When we had rowed to a considerable distance from the shore, the English began to run in vast numbers to their forts. Their disappointment may easily be imagined when they found at least thirty heavy cannon, the instruments of their vengeance, rendered useless. At length, however, they began to fire, having, as I apprehend, either brought down ships' guns or used one or two cannon which lay on the beach and which had not been spiked. They fired with no direction, and the shot, falling short of the boats, instead of doing us any damage, afforded some diversion, which my people could not help showing by discharging their pistols, etc., in return of the salute. Had it been possible to have landed a few hours sooner, my success would have been complete. Not a single ship out of more than two hundred, could possibly have escaped, and all the world would not have been able to save the town. What was done, however, is sufficient to show that not all their boasted navy can protect their own coast, and that the scenes of distress which they have occasioned to America, may be soon brought home to their own



door. One of my people<sup>1</sup> was missing, and must, I fear, have fallen into the enemies hands after our departure. I was pleased that in this business we neither killed nor wounded any person. I brought off three prisoners as a sample.

In his "Memorial" addressed to Congress from the Texel, in 1779, Jones further elucidates the object he had in view in this expedition, and explains his lieutenant's failure to carry out his part of the plan to burn the shipping at Whitehaven:

My first object was to secure an exchange of prisoners in Europe, and my second to put an end, by one good fire in England of shipping, to all the burnings to America. I succeeded in the first, even by means far more glorious than my most flattering ideas had expected, when I left France. In the second, I endeavored to deserve success, but a wise officer of mine observed that "it was a rash thing, and that nothing could be got by burning poor people's property." I must, however, do him the justice to mention his acknowledgment that he had no turn for enterprise, and I must also do justice to my former officers in the *Providence* and the *Alfred* by declaring that had they been with me in the *Ranger*, 250 or 300 sail of large ships at Whitehaven would have been laid in ashes.

<sup>1</sup> This man, according to a foot-note in the Edinburgh "Life of Jones," was a sailor called David Freeman, who voluntarily remained on shore, having given information that fire had been set to a ship. In an alarmed notice of the Whitehaven attack, published in the *Cumberland Packet* of April 28, 1778, he is described as the "savior of the town." Another account says that this man was seen running from house to house shouting that the Americans had landed and were firing the shipping, and the *Gentlemen's Magazine* for 1778 states that the destruction of the town was "providentially prevented by the exertions of the inhabitants, who extinguished the flames before they reached the rigging of the ships."

How often Paul Jones must have compared those beloved and loyal officers of the *Alfred* and *Providence* to the motley and mutinous crews which later he was called upon to command. Ill-clad and ill-fed, they shared with him the dangers of the northern seas, were fired by his enthusiasm, grateful for his generosity, and only too anxious to sail again with him. It has frequently been charged by his detractors that Paul Jones was an overbearing and unpopular commander. If he had been fortunate enough always to have been furnished with crews like those of the *Alfred* and the *Providence* it is safe to say that he never would have appeared to deserve this imputation. The facts in regard to the disposition of the *Ranger's* crew, set forth in his own reports to the commissioners, and most amply supported by the subsequent history of these men, lead to the conclusion that Jones's patience with their insubordination was nothing short of marvellous, and the success attained with their support an extraordinary example of tact and determination.

Not having sole power to choose the officers of the *Ranger*, he had been compelled to accept the selections of the two other members of the commission appointed by Congress, John Langdon and Abraham Whipple. These New England men, the first and most important men in Portsmouth, were both more or less sectional in their sympathies and had no mind to give the "North Carolina Captain" too much authority, particularly in their own territory. Although permitted to take upon himself the tedious and troublesome duties of equipping the *Ranger* and of advancing the wages of the crew

to induce them to engage, Jones himself had, in fact, named one single officer, Captain Parke, of the marines. Neither the first lieutenant, Simpson, nor the second, Elijah Hall, had ever sailed before in a ship of war. Before starting on his cruise against the British coasts, Jones, having discovered the animosity of his crew toward Captain Parke, for harmony's sake had sent him back to America. Eight of the crew deserted in Quiberon when they discovered that Jones's intentions were more extensive than a mere cruise after merchant-ships, and Simpson and others of the officers and crew flatly refused to obey orders. This spirit of insubordination so increased that before they left Brest a conspiracy had already been formed to kill or confine their captain and return to America under Lieutenant Simpson. This mutinous disposition continued throughout the cruise, was the reason of the failure to effect the total destruction of the shipping at Whitehaven, and caused the unfortunate outcome of Jones's plan of descent upon Lord Selkirk's castle on Saint Mary's Isle. This celebrated raid took place on the evening of the same day of the attempt on Whitehaven and is briefly mentioned in the next paragraph of Jones's report to the commissioners. This part of his narrative, together with the curious correspondence connected with the incident, will be more fully considered later.

In regard to his capture of the *Drake* Jones's narrative again becomes copious and detailed.

On the morning of the 24th, I was again off Carrick Fergus and would have gone in had I not seen the

*Drake* preparing to come out—it was very moderate and the *Drake's* boat was sent out to reconnoitre the *Ranger*. As the boat advanced, I kept the ship's stern directly towards her, and though they had a spy glass in the boat, they came on within hail and alongside. When the officer came on the quarterdeck, he was greatly surprised to find himself a prisoner, although an express had arrived from Whitehaven the night before. I now understood what I had before imagined, that the *Drake* came out in consequence of this information, with volunteers against the *Ranger*. The officer told me also, that they had taken up the *Ranger's* anchor. The *Drake* was attended by five small vessels full of people who were led by curiosity to see an engagement, but when they saw the *Drake's* boat at the *Ranger's* side, they wisely put back. Alarm smokes now appeared in great abundance, extending along on both sides of the channel. The tide was unfavorable, so that the *Drake* worked out but slowly. This obliged me to run down several times and to lay with courses up, and main topsail to the mast. At length the *Drake* weathered the point and having led her out to about midchannel I suffered her to come within hail. The *Drake* hoisted English colors, and at the same instant the American stars were displayed on board the *Ranger*. I expected that preface had now been at an end, but the enemy soon after hailed, demanding what ship it was. I directed the master to answer "the American Continental ship *Ranger*; that we waited for them and desired that they would come on; the sun was now a little more than an hour from setting, and it was therefore time to begin." The *Drake* being astern of the *Ranger*, I ordered the helm up and gave her the first broadside. The action was warm, close and obstinate. It lasted an hour and four minutes, when the enemy called for quarters; her four and main top-

sail yards being both cut away and down on the cap; the top gallant yard and mizzen gaff both hanging up and down along the mast; the second ensign which they had hoisted shot away and hanging in the water; the sails and rigging entirely cut to pieces, her masts and yards all wounded and her hull very much galled. I lost only Lieutenant Wallingsford, and one seaman, John Dougall, killed, and six wounded, among whom are the gunner, Mr. Falls and Mr. Powers, a midshipman, who lost his arm. One of the wounded, Nathaniel Wills, is since dead, the rest will recover. The loss of the enemies killed and wounded is much greater. All the prisoners allow that they came out with a number not less than 160 men and many of them affirm that they amounted to one hundred and ninety. The medium may perhaps be the most exact account; and by that it will appear that they lost, in killed and wounded, forty-two men. The captain and lieutenant were among the wounded, the former having received a musket ball in the head the minute before they called for quarter, lived and was sensible some time after my people boarded the prize. The lieutenant survived two days. They were buried with the honors due to their rank and the respect due their memory.

Here, then, was a victory won fairly in open fight within sight of the enemy's coast and in the view of hundreds of spectators, over a fully armed English man-of-war. Victory was on the side of the Americans from the firing of the first broadside. Although slightly verbose and over-eloquent in his answer to the enemy's appeal, a method which one commentator thinks was adopted for the purpose of getting his ship in line for the first manœuvre, Jones was short and sharp enough

in action. Before the enemy was aware of his intent, he ran the *Ranger* across the bows of the *Drake*, raking her decks with a destructive fire and thus gaining an advantage which in the broadside to broadside contest which followed was never recovered by the English. The superior handling of the *Ranger* over that of the *Drake*, which belonged to a regularly established and wellnigh universally victorious navy, is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the equipment of the *Ranger* was experimental and defective, and its officers, with the exception of the captain, totally without experience in war.

In considering the relative merits of the victory, it is seen by Jones's report that the English ship carried twice as many men as the American. The *Ranger's* guns were eighteen six-pounders, while according to the principal witness in the English court-martial, held over the survivors of the battle, the *Drake's* guns, although twenty in number, were four-pounders. This advantage, however, may fairly be considered as diminished by the shortness of the *Ranger's* guns (a defect of which Jones had complained) and more than balanced by the numerical superiority of the *Drake's* crew, all fully supplied with small arms, and by her greater size and heavier construction. Professor Laughton, an able although partisan English authority, states in extenuation of the loss of the *Drake*, that "her crew was increased by a number of newly raised men, and that there was no gunner, no cartridges filled and no preparation for handling powder." It is also stated that the first lieutenant, who was killed in the battle,

had boarded the *Drake* as she was warping out of the channel, to take the place of the officer who had died two days before the engagement. Captain Burden, who was also mortally wounded a quarter of an hour before his ship surrendered, was beyond the reach of the question of the court-martial as to why he deliberately took his vessel out in an unprepared condition to meet and capture the *Ranger*.<sup>1</sup> A confession of unreadiness for battle is hardly an apology for defeat, nor does the admitted fact that the forts at Whitehaven were guarded by sleeping sentinels excuse the weakness of the English coast defences. Jones also had his difficulties with his insubordinate and almost unmanageable crew. A drunken quartermaster caused the failure of his first bold attack upon the *Drake*, a disobedient officer wellnigh rendered abortive the descent upon Whitehaven, and, according to his account drawn up for King Louis XVI, his officers not only planned to leave him on shore at Whitehaven, but refused to engage the *Drake* in open day, as he earnestly desired, and were again in open mutiny and planning to throw him overboard when the English ship, toward nightfall, fortunately volunteered the battle and forced them to defend their lives.

In Jones's journal for Louis XVI he states, "that plunder rather than honor was the object of the

<sup>1</sup> George Roberts, of Dover, New Hampshire, who was a seaman on the *Ranger*, has left an account of a visit to the *Drake* immediately after her capture. He found the dead body of an English officer in the uniform of the land service, who had come to see the Yankees whipped. The hogshead of rum which had been sent on board to drink to their victory had been demolished by a cannon-ball.—(Boston Public Library.)

*Ranger's* officers and crew," and that on his announcing his intention of giving battle to the *Drake* the crew of the *Ranger* revolted, "and I ran every chance of being killed or thrown over-board." The truth of this statement is attested by the certificate of Lieutenant Meyer, a Swedish officer who had entered the service of the United States under the auspices of Silas Deane and was on board the *Ranger*.<sup>1</sup>

The personal element in Jones's conduct of this celebrated battle was therefore solely responsible for the victory. His ship, according to Professor Laughton's admission, was well handled and well fought, and this result was accomplished by the extraordinary character of its commander who, at the moment of action, could inspire an inexperienced and rebellious crew with

<sup>1</sup> "I, Jean Meyer, lieutenant in the Infantry regiment of the Baron de Fleming, in the service of his Majesty the King of Sweden, on leave with permission of the court, do certify, to all it may concern that I embarked at Nantes in Brittany, on the 12th February, 1778, in the frigate *Ranger* commanded by Captain Paul Jones, to whom I was recommended by M. le Comte de Kraits, ambassador of his majesty at the court of France, in pursuance of my purpose of entering the service of Congress under the auspices of M. Silas Deane, who told me to report to the Honbl Robert Morris, an order which I was unable to obey. The said Captain Jones deciding to cruise in St Georges channel, brought me finally back to France. During the cruise I observed that cabals and plots were being formed against the said Captain Jones. To assure myself of the truth or falsity of my suspicion I questioned a Swedish sailor by the name of Shoondelin who spoke English perfectly and who informed me that the crew supported by the majority of the officers had decided to sieze the person of their captain whom they disliked because he was a Scotchman with the intention of throwing him overboard, or at least to put him in irons. They intended afterwards to choose Lieutenant Simpson for their captain, to take them back to America their country, where all ardently desired to return. I immediately informed Captain Jones of this plot, happily for him, for if he had not been warned of the misfortune which threatened him, one day when the master had the temerity to attack him, he would undoubtedly have been over come (all the officers being hostile to him, and having



something of his own skill and enthusiasm. Nothing short of his unequalled pertinacity, his own inflexible determination and superb self-confidence, could have succeeded under such conditions. The practical results of this brilliant victory were great and immediate. The contemporary English newspapers abound in accounts of the arming of defensive fleets and of their ports and of the re-establishment of coast guards. Householders prepared to remove their goods to places of safety, and bankers packed up their gold in boxes and retired to the country. In London stocks fell and insurance rates on merchant-ships, which had already greatly risen after Conyngham's cruises and captures, were now trebled. The moral effect of this one man's exploits was still more remarkable and far-reaching.

by previous agreement scatted to different parts of the ship) if the brave captain had not pointed his pistol at the head of his assailant. I attest also that on the day when we made the landing in two boats at the port of Whitehaven, that the captain had hardly left the first boat in which I accompanied him, together with a few sailors, to take possession of the forts when the other men who remained in the boat tried to persuade me not to land, because if the captain did not return immediately they intended to leave him behind and to return to the ship. This plan had undoubtedly been concerted with Captain Hill and Lieutenant Wallenson (Wallingsford) for they delayed a long time before landing from the other boat to second Jones in his plan, according to his directions. Jones called to them several times. Finally, however, when they saw their commander on the ramparts, and heard his summons to come and share the glory with him, they decided to join him. I only left my boat at the last moment, because I wanted to watch the sailors, who remained with me, to see to it, in case Mr. Hill and Mr. Wallenson went off with their boat that ours should be ready to receive the valiant captain, renowned in both the old and new worlds for actions which have brought him immortal reputation—, and to take him back to the ship to resume his command. I affirm that no reason except a regard for truth and justice which are alike the illuminating guides of my conscience has dictated this certificate, and that I sign it in the hope that it may be of service and value to whomever it may concern. At Dunkirk, April, 1778."

An immediate and very extraordinary result of the terror which his successful attacks upon their coasts produced upon the English people was the development which actually occurred at this time of a permanent volunteer service. In a book entitled "The Annals of a Yorkshire House," which relates the history of Colonel George Stanhope's connection with this service, is found the following description of the volunteer camps which were organized in the year 1778:

In 1778 when the conclusion was announced of the treaty of commerce between France and the States of America, a war with France appeared imminent, and excitement was universal at the prospect. Partly on that account, partly owing to the alarm occasioned by the depredations of Paul Jones, the celebrated Privateer who greatly hampered British commerce, the militia was called out, and the country began arming itself. Stanhope, who had ardently wished for a regiment was delighted on April 17th of that year to receive a cordial letter from Lord Rockingham announcing that "I have been able to give you what you so desire, a captain's commission, in the command of the company in the regiment of militia in the West Riding of Yorkshire, whereof Sir George Savile is Colonel." If anything had been required to whet Stanhope's ardour, the events of that April must have done so. On the 23rd of that month Jones, after a bold attack upon the *Drake* Sloop of War, entered Whitehaven, and made an attempt to set on fire the three hundred ships which lay there. Forced to make his escape, without having achieved his object, he landed on St. Mary's Isle intending to kidnap Lord Selkirk, and hold him hostage. The Earl was absent from home, but Jones followers insisted upon plundering his silver plate, and crowned

their success the next day by a second attack upon the *Drake*, which they captured after an hour's contest. The alarm was universal, and the importance of the episode was magnified by the friends and foes of Great Britain. England was soon studded with militia camps, and Stanhope threw himself with avidity into his occupation. When Parliament rose early in June of that year, members instead of retiring to the country seats went with their regiments to join in mimic warfare. There were camps at Salisbury, at Bury St. Edmunds, at Cox Heath in Kent, at Warly Common, in Essex and at Winchester. "Camps everywhere" writes Walpole, "and the ladies in the uniform of their husbands.— All the world are politicians or soldiers or both, servants are learning to fire, all day long." Yet these gatherings were scenes of festivity and fun as well as of hard soldiering, places not only for military manœuvres and manual exercise, but for fashionable picnics and flirtations; the most noted men of the day made a point of visiting them, and becoming spectators of the new amusement, which had for its basis a commendable object. Lord Palmerston, Garrick, Dr Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds, were among those who witnessed the operations at Warly Common, and the Doctor, as he watched the regimental manœuvres or went visiting round amongst the men in command, made it his aim to learn all he could about Military duty and drill. "The Cox Heath men," he wrote, facetiously to the commander of the Lincolnshire regiment, "I think have reason to complain, for Reynolds says your camp is better than theirs." Finally a Royal progress round the camps took place, which began in Winchester, where the King visited the troops on September 29th. The military fervor of that age was not merely a pose, born without cause and fated to die without fruits. Its effect upon the betterment of a permanent volunteer force has ex-

tended to our own times, while its necessity at the date which witnessed its rise, may be inferred from the course of events.

Jones was, in fact, the most formidable enemy which England then possessed upon the sea, through his knowledge of their coasts, his remarkable foresight, and his unequalled fighting qualities. Secure in the quiet of their country homes, with pride excited by the recent and world-wide extension of their dominions, safe in the consciousness of their undisputed command upon the sea, the revolt of the American colonies was a matter which had very little disturbed the people at large, and was considered as a futile rebellion of a contemptible and cowardly lot of yokels easily to be subdued by Hessian mercenaries, or, if necessary, by the scalping-knife of the Indian. The venial subserviency and incapacity of a ministry controlled by the obstinacy of a slow-witted king prevailed over the wiser counsellors of the nation. The solemn laments of the dying Chatham lamenting the dismemberment of the empire he had helped to extend, the fiery denunciations of Burke and Fox, were drowned in choruses of indecent raillery from the benches of Westminster, and the sarcastic prophecies of Walpole, crying out in warning from Strawberry Hill, were unheeded by a people who, until the advent of Paul Jones, had been slumbering in peace. With a terror which curiously finds its counterpart in later times, the very idea that the "Englishman's home" could be invaded now cast the whole island into unreasoning and hysterical panic. It was all very well

that armies should be sent across the seas to fight the rebellious colonies, but when the shipping in their unprotected ports could be set on fire, their battle-ships taken in home waters, and English peers be in danger of capture in their sacred homes, it was a very different matter. Chap-books depicted Paul Jones as a buccaneer, armed to the teeth, in highly colored pictures, bloody and terrifying. Mothers frightened their children with the bare mention of his name. From this time on he was celebrated in popular song, and took his place with Captain Kidd in the histories of the pirate kings. There is nothing surprising in the fact that Jones should have been dubbed a rebel in the days when the revolted Americans were all considered felons, and traitors to the mother country.<sup>1</sup>

The correctness of these titles was an issue which all the colonists were discussing with the uncertain arguments of war. Had the outcome been otherwise, Paul Jones might have been hanged as a rebel and a like fate

<sup>1</sup> An amusing incident concerning a gale of wind which drove him on one occasion away from the Scottish coasts, is quoted by Sherburne from a contemporary book by a Mr. Henderson.

"About the time that Jones visited Whitehaven, he went round to the Firth of Forth, and made his appearance off the harbor of Kirkaldy, a noted small town on the borders of Fifeshire, (called by the Scotch 'Langtoun o' Kirkaldy,' owing to its length). No other enemy, however formidable, could have created in the minds of the inhabitants such consternation and alarm as that which then approached. Paul Jones was the dread of all, young and old, & (pamphlets of his depredations were as common in every house as almanacs). He was looked upon as a sea-monster, that swallowed up all that came in his power. The people all flocked to the shore to watch his movements, expecting the worse consequences. There was an old Presbyterian Minister in the place, a very pious and good old man, but of a most singular and eccentric turn, especially in addressing the Deity, to whom he would speak with as much familiarity as he would to an old farmer, and seemingly without respect, as will appear from the following. He was soon

might have befallen those great leaders whose names have been revered through more than a century of glorious independence. He was, however, particularly well qualified, in the eyes of the British, to bear the added title of "pirate." He commanded a vessel disguised as a merchantman; he made sudden and stealthy midnight descents upon their vessels and their ports; his method of warfare, brilliantly skilful as it was, had a coolness and a daring unexpectedness which recalled the legends of the early Vikings, a method which clothed his name with the immortal halo of romance but brought upon him the bitter hatred of his native land. It is, however, a matter surprising, in any nature but the English, that a people forced in a few brief years to acknowledge the independence of the United States should even now ignore the commissioned authority of Jones, who was at the very time that he made his first descent upon the English coasts the very first accredited standard-bearer of our flag in Europe, which, through him, re-

seen making his way through the people with an old black oak arm-chair which he lugged down to the low-water mark (the tide flowing) and sat down in it. Almost out of breath, and rather in a passion, he then began to address the Deity in the following singular way:—

"'Now *deed* Lord, *dinna* ye think it's a shame for *ye* to send this vile *pireet* to *rub* out *folk* o' Kirkaldy; for ye *ken* they're *a' puir* enough already, and *hae naething* to *spare*. They are *a' gaily gaid*, and it *wad* be a *peety* to serve them in *sic in a wa*. The *wa* the *wun* blaws, he'll be here in a jiffie, and *wha kens* what he may do. He's *nain* too guid for anything. Meickle's the mischief he *has dune* already. Ony packet gear they *hae gathered thegither* he will *gang wi'* the *heal* o't; and burn their *hooses*, tak their *vary claes* and *tirl* them to the *sark*; and *waes me!* *wha kens* but the bluidy villain might tak their lives. The *puir weemen* ere *maist frightened* out o' their *wuts*, and the *bairns* *skirling* after them. I *canna' tho't!* I *hae been lang* a *faithfu'* servant to ye, *Laird*; but *gin ye dinna* turn the *wun* about, and *blaw* the scoundrel out of the gate, I'll *na stur* a fit, but will just sit here, until the tide comes and drowns me. *Sae tak yere wull* o't.'"

ceived its first salute from French admirals in the open ports of France. The honors he subsequently received from the courts of Russia, France, and Denmark have likewise been persistently ignored in England, and in these later days, in spite of the recent and much-heralded recovery of his honored remains by the grateful country he helped to free, the old obloquy still clouds his name.

Paul Jones has not unnaturally been censured for the choice of the familiar localities of his childhood for his retaliatory attacks. In the excellent biography by Captain A. S. McKenzie, of the United States navy, published in 1848, the author gives expression to this hostile opinion.

Few naval enterprises exhibit a character of greater daring and originality than the descent upon Whitehaven, the hardihood with which it was conceived and the imperturbable coolness with which it was executed. As to the propriety of attempting to destroy such an amount of private property, it was amply justified, as it was provoked and occasioned by the burning and devastations of the British on our own coasts. Still the author cannot coincide with such of his countrymen as have commended Jones for volunteering to be the agent of this retribution. The scheme was wholly his own. He selected the scene, choosing for the purpose the familiar haunts of his boyhood. Had he succeeded in his wish of destroying the whole shipping in the port of Whitehaven, out of which he had so long sailed, he must have involved shipmates, employers, and benefactors in one common ruin. It has been said that Paul Jones alone, on account of his familiarity with the localities, could have attempted this project

with success—if so, it had better been omitted altogether.

In answer to this critical comment it is interesting to quote the very able defence of Paul Jones written by his niece, Miss Taylor, during her visit to America, in 1848, which exists in her own handwriting in a collection of manuscripts in the Harvard Library, prepared by Jared Sparks, for a life of her celebrated uncle:

The connection of Paul Jones with America, commences with his thirteenth year and from that period until his descent upon Whitehaven, he had never resided for five consecutive years, in any port of the world, America excepted. He had at the time, no mother, sister or relation of any denomination whatsoever in either Whitehaven or its neighborhood; the hand of death had placed beyond the reach of his wholesale desolation both his employers and almost every person belonging to the place, with whom he had ever had any intercourse. If Paul Jones can be justified in taking up arms in behalf of the revolted Colonies, he may also be justified for his descent upon Whitehaven. If he cannot be the former, what apology is to be offered for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who were Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, and Welshmen by birth?

There are many indications that Jones was mindful of the peculiar position he occupied in commanding and directing these cruises in his home seas. No instance of brutality or vindictiveness in his conduct is discernible; there were no wanton acts of destruction; there was no unnecessary bloodshed, but a gallant



punctiliousness in the observation of all the rules and ceremonies of honorable warfare, strangely in contrast with the customs of the English and their hirelings in America. He comments with the most evident satisfaction upon the facts that the sentinels in the Whitehaven ports were captured "unharméd," and that he never killed or injured any single person during the attack.

If he realized, as he must have done, that his attack upon the English coasts would bring upon him a peculiar execration, and stain eternally the fame he held so dear; if he believed that his peculiar familiarity with these coasts pre-eminently fitted him, and him alone, to conduct these attacks, the sacrifice of his personal feelings must be considered an admirable act of loyalty to the country which he served. The bitter recollections of the injustice and jealous undervaluations which had been his lot, in common with other prophets, in his own country, may naturally have tempered his reluctance to appear as the triumphant avenger of its injustice, and he was also inspired by that burning desire for fame which his most enthusiastic admirer cannot fail to recognize as the ruling motive of his character. His conviction of the justice of the cause he had embraced, the cause of liberty and of human nature, which had been adopted by the new thought of a changing world, was equally ardent and openly avowed.

In this first of his two glorious cruises against the British coast he succeeded, in spite of the reluctance of his mutinous crew, in accomplishing the two principal

objects of his daring purpose: he terrified the too confident enemy into a recognition that their own coasts could be attacked and their invulnerable battle-ships could be captured; and, above all, he brought about the exchange of American captives, hitherto treated as felons and rebels, on equal terms with English seamen as prisoners of war, and thus forced what was in fact England's first recognition of the existence of America as an independent power.

The capture of the *Drake* was unprecedented, almost incredible, at that time of England's unquestioned maritime supremacy, and added the crowning glory to a cruise which for cool audacity and brilliant initiative has never been surpassed in naval history.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SELKIRK RAID

SINGULAR as the celebrated descent upon Lord Selkirk's estate at Saint Mary's Isle has always been considered by the biographers of Paul Jones, its actual significance has never been fully appreciated.

When, after a careful examination of the evidence which has been preserved in his own writings and in other contemporary documents, the conclusion becomes inevitable that Paul Jones believed up to the time of his attack upon Saint Mary's Isle that he was the unacknowledged son of Lord Selkirk, his determination to carry him off as a hostage assumes the character of a conception which might easily find its place in melodrama. The earliest testimony which bears upon this, the most questionable of all Jones's actions, is found in the narrative of Thomas Chase, wherein it is stated with categorical emphasis that Paul Jones, during his conversations with Chase, had expressed his belief that he was the son of Lord Selkirk and stated that his earliest recollections were of Saint Mary's Isle. He admitted also, according to the Chase narrative, that he was continually taunted with his illegitimate birth, and asserted this to have been the principal cause of his early departure from Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Wharton Green repeats these facts as reported by Major Knox, who was a guest at "The Grove." Major Knox was also authority for Jones's statement that he had assumed the name of Jones because he had none of his own.

Rumors orally transmitted by those in intimate association with Jones during his sojourn at "The Grove," in North Carolina, in the year 1774, repeat these statements, and, as far as such traditions can be accepted as historical evidence, tend to confirm the truth of Thomas Chase's narrative.

The most significant testimony, however, exists in the remarkable letter to Benjamin Franklin of March 6, 1779, wherein Jones used the following extraordinary phrases in reference to Lord Selkirk and his refusal to accept the return of the plate which was taken by Jones's men from his house. "It has not been my intention to attract his notice either by my history or otherwise,—if however, his delicacy will not suffer him, to receive what he thinks an obligation from me it will be no difficult matter to point out to him, if he should be at a loss, how to discharge that obligation."

Taken in conjunction with the fact that these phrases are found in a letter of the most private and confidential character, wherein Jones not only makes his full statement of the killing of the mutineer, but refers to other obscure incidents in his career—as if to his father confessor—the curious remark that *it had not been his intention to attract Lord Selkirk's notice by his history or otherwise* cannot be overlooked.

In the total absence of any other circumstances which might assign another significance to these peculiar expressions, the statements in Chase's narrative supply the only available and highly probable reasons which prompted Jones to use them.

In connection with the above mutually confirmatory evidence, a letter from William Birnie, a Scotchman now resident in New York City, demands consideration.<sup>1</sup> William Birnie is the great-grandson of George Paul, the gardener at Saint Mary's Isle and brother of Paul Jones's reputed father, John Paul, of Arbigland. Birnie's reference to the latter indicates a suspicion that the latter was not Jones's father, and he also admits his knowledge of a well-defined rumor of Jones's connection with the Selkirk family. When questioned on the subject his mother admitted that she knew something in regard to the birth of John Paul Jones which she might some time reveal. Mrs. Birnie was a granddaughter of George Paul and spent her early life in

<sup>1</sup> NEW YORK, *Mar.* 8, 1908.

SIR:

The other day when I told you that on my mother's side, I was descended from George Paul, the Earl of Selkirk's gardener, who according to the school histories when I went to school, was the father of John Paul Jones, you told me to write an account of what I knew or had heard about the connection. Which request is the excuse for the following.

My mother was a daughter of John Paul of Kircudbright, Scotland. What the exact year of his birth was I do not know, but think from what my uncle writes it was 1785. He came to this country and settled in Charleston S. C. in the very beginning of the last century, going into business, as a wholesale and retail grocer. When the war of 1812 broke out, he organized a company of Scotchmen for the defence of Charleston, and was their captain until the close of the war. In 1828 he retired from business and returned to Kircudbright where in 1829 he married Isabella Mc'Whinnie of the same place. He died June 2, 1846 leaving eight children, four sons and four daughters. His father was John Paul a carpenter and builder of Kircudbright, whose wife was Mary Kerr of the same place. They were the parents of twelve children. He died at the age of 72, I don't know the year, but his wife who survived him died in 1828.

The father of the last mentioned John Paul, was George Paul, the Earl of Salkirk's gardener. I do not know the year of his birth or death

Scotland with her relatives. She never revealed this mystery, but her evidence tends to confirm Chase's statement that the stigma of illegitimacy had been cast upon Paul Jones. Further confirmatory evidence in regard to the obscurity surrounding his birth is found in the fact that his name is not recorded with those of his sisters in the Parish register at Kirkbean. This obscurity is also augmented by the written statement of the clergyman of Kirkbean, Doctor Grierson, reporting that Mr. Dunbar Hamilton Craik, the grandson of Jones's patron, Robert Craik, had informed him personally that the date of Jones's birth as given in the so-called Edinburgh biography was incorrect. Mr.

nor his father's first name. His brother John, also a gardener, is the generally accepted father of Paul Jones to-day.

I cannot recall any family tradition about Paul Jones, except that my great grandfather on one occasion ordered him out of his house for being impolite to the ladies. The Kircudbright people considered him a Buccaneer, and never mentioned his name if they could help it.

One day in a talk with Mother, I suggested that Paul Jones was not a Paul, but a Douglass (The earl of Selkirk's family name.) She said that he was not a Douglass but a Paul, and that at some time she would tell me all that she had heard about him. I have at different times asked my Uncle if they had any information that they could give me, but they said that they knew nothing about him.

When I was a boy of nine we spent the summer of 1870 in Kircudbright with an aunt of Mother's, Miss Agnes Paul. Her house was on ground that George Paul owned and used as a nursery after he left the Earl's employ. The house, or rather the back of it, was built by his son, the carpenter, the front being added by my grandfather. Two of my aunts live there to-day.

During my stay in Kircudbright my uncle took me to St. Mary's Isle (The Earl's residence) to see the silver that Paul Jones had "stolen" from the Earl of Selkirk when he made his raid on the Scotch coast. This silver was afterward returned to Lady Selkirk with the compliments of John Paul Jones. Although the Kircudbright people pretend to despise Paul Jones, they are mighty proud of the silver.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) WM. BIRNIE.

To Capt. John H. Barnes.

Craik affirmed that he was not born on July 6, 1747, but several years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the letter of William Birnie, we find the categorical statement of his mother that he was not a Douglass, but was in reality a Paul. An examination of the recorded data in regard to the whereabouts and history of both the third and the fourth Earls of Selkirk, confirms Mrs. Birnie's negation, and proves without question that Paul Jones was not related by blood to either of them. The third Lord Selkirk died in the year 1744 at Edinburgh at the advanced age of eighty-two, having been resident in that city for several years prior to his death. The fourth Lord Selkirk, whose son Jones apparently believed himself to be, was the fourth cousin of the third earl, living at a distance from Saint Mary's Isle, at Baldoon, in another part of Scotland. At the time he inherited the property he was actively engaged in recruiting royalist soldiers in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, and exerted himself with the greatest zeal in animating the inhabitants of

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from Dr. Filkins's note-book:

"The following extract from a letter from Reverend Thomas Grierson A. M. dated Kirkbean Manse, Oct. 17th, 1842.—

"'John Paul, alias Paul Jones was born in this Parrish at Arbigland. His father was gardener to Mr. Craik, grandfather of the present excellent proprietor, Douglas Hamilton Craik. . . . He was born, according to a printed life of him in Mr. Craik's possession, the 6th of July, 1747. Mr. Craik told me to-day that he believed he was born several years earlier. He used to carry about the present Laird upon his back when he was a child.'"

Another statement from the *Naval and Military Gazette* of January 14, 1843, also found in Doctor Filkins's note-books, affirms that Jones was born in the year 1742. Jones's last secretary, André, who published his journal of the American war in 1798, gives it as his belief that Jones was older than the age ordinarily assigned to him.

THE RESIDENCE OF THE EARL OF SELKIRK AT SAINT MARY'S ISLE, WHICH WAS  
PULLED DOWN IN 1891.





Lanarkshire and the western counties to support the government.

After the end of the rebellion Lord Selkirk went abroad, where he remained, principally in France, for a number of years. It was not until his marriage, which occurred in the year 1758, that he took up his residence on the estate of Saint Mary's Isle, which he had inherited fourteen years before.

The only point contained in the historical records of the lives of the third and fourth Earls of Selkirk, which bears upon the presence of Paul Jones at Saint Mary's Isle, is found in the fact that the Duke of Queensbury was a brother-in-law of the third earl. This fact is of great importance when taken in connection with the sentence in Jones's letter to Robert Morris in which he refers to "his former intimacy with British Naval Officers of note." This sentence points unquestionably to his service in the royal navy, and furnishes incontrovertible confirmatory evidence of his own later statements as reported in the letter of his fellow-lodger, quoted in Chapter I, that he received his appointment at the hands of Lord Selkirk's brother-in-law, the Duke of Queensbury, and that he was seen by the duke at Saint Mary's Isle.

The fact being established that he was not the son of either the third or the fourth Earl of Selkirk, and as it is also certain that he was actually present at Saint Mary's Isle, it is necessary to come to some conclusion as to the reasons which caused Paul Jones's belief in a relationship with the Selkirk family, and the facts which gave color to such an assump-

tion. The statement of Jones's fellow-lodger, printed by the reviewer of Sherburne's biography, that Jones had told him that he was the son of Lord Selkirk's gardener, coupled with the knowledge of George Paul's descendants that although of doubtful paternity Jones was a Paul, would point to the identification of George Paul, gardener of Lord Selkirk, as the actual father of Paul Jones. This hypothesis, although impossible of confirmation, furnishes a reasonable explanation of Jones's presence during his early childhood at Saint Mary's Isle, particularly in view of the emphatic statement of the reviewer of Sherburne's biography, that the testimony of Jones's fellow-lodger was to be relied upon. Assuming that the testimony of Mr. Craik is correct, and that Jones was born several years earlier than the generally accepted date, he was probably at Saint Mary's Isle as early as 1744 or 1745. There he was brought up in ignorance of his real paternity, although constantly taunted by his supposed illegitimacy, and there he was seen and favorably noticed by the Duke of Queensbury.

According to the accounts contained in both the biographies written in association with Jones's relatives, he was apprenticed at the early age of twelve to Mr. Younger and sent off to America in the year 1759. If, however, he was born several years before 1747, he would have been fourteen or a little older at the time of his first sea service.

After the failure of Mr. Younger, Paul Jones was thrown out of employment and, as related in Chapter I, applied to the Duke of Queensbury for assist-

ance, relying upon his early acquaintance with him and the marked interest which the duke had manifested. He was not disappointed in this hope of assistance, and, having been recommended to a commander in the navy, received his appointment and entered the service. Deciding to abandon it on account of lack of opportunity for quick advancement, he immediately procured his first independent place on board the slaver *King George*, in the year 1766. It is evident from these facts that the young John Paul was rarely in Scotland from the date of his first departure with Mr. Younger for America.

Whatever his feeling might have been toward his putative father, it is remarkable that no reference whatever exists in any of his letters in regard to the elder John Paul, while his letters and references to his mother and sisters are many and affectionate.

The honored and universally respected gardener, while loyal to his wife, who was apparently beloved by all her family, was evidently unwilling to countenance the presence of the boy, who at the earliest possible age was apprenticed to the captain of a trading-vessel and sent off for long voyages and sojourns across the sea.

Bitterly conscious of his supposed illegitimacy, the boy must have brooded during the long hours of his exile over the mystery, attempting to solve it in the light of the only facts of which he was possessed, his early presence at Saint Mary's Isle and the protection of the Duke of Queensbury. He knew that he could not refer his paternity to the octogenarian, the third Earl of Selkirk, but his infant recollections were wholly devoid of

any facts which would disprove a relationship with the fourth earl, the young Dunbar Hamilton, who inherited the estate in 1744. The fact that he was not permitted to return to Saint Mary's Isle after the Lord Selkirk of his day had come with his young wife to live on the estate, might easily have added substance to Jones's fancy, and have confirmed his belief that he was the earl's child, originally harbored at his home, provided with the advantageous position in the navy, and subsequently sent back, in fear of discovery of his birth, to the humble cottage at Arbigland. These were the facts on which John Paul dwelt with bitterness during the years of his service in the navy, when his obscure birth seemed the sole cause of his failure to advance with the rapidity demanded by his impatient and ardent nature. As he grew older and became conscious of his extraordinary mental powers, the ambitious lad tenaciously clung to the supposition that the protection of the Duke of Queensbury, accorded to him in so unusual a manner, must argue an obligation on the part of the family with which the duke was connected.

An illegitimate son of his mother's patron, Mr. Craik had been acknowledged and protected by his father, and the young John Paul bitterly resented that the protection which he had received at the hands of the Selkirk family should not be accompanied by an open acknowledgment of the supposed relationship. This suspicion, fostered by imagination and uncorrected by any facts at his command, during the long years of his absence from Scotland grew into a belief. This belief finally became so strong that he spoke freely of it to

Thomas Chase and to his friends in North Carolina, and at last hinted it in words of unmistakable significance in his letter to Benjamin Franklin.<sup>1</sup>

Having now recapitulated the facts which pertained to Jones's belief in his relationship to the Selkirk family, the thoughts which animated him on the morning of his descent upon Saint Mary's Isle may be clearly imagined. The same spirit of bravado and the burning determination to announce his new position and importance, which had filled his mind as he stood with his pointed pistol on the pier defying the wonder-stricken inhabitants of Whitehaven, now drove him, beyond his better judgment, to enter the very gates of his one-time abode, and to show his power to the man whom he believed to be his father.

The reasons which he consistently maintained had actuated him in his purpose to carry off Lord Selkirk as a hostage and thus effect the deliverance of the American prisoners, although undoubtedly a part of his plan, thus assume a minor importance. Lord Selkirk, as he afterward averred in a letter to Jones, was in no way connected with the government of England, and could at no time or for any reason have been so important to the King or his ministers as to have effected an exchange of the many hundreds of American prisoners still in captivity in England.

<sup>1</sup> An example of the exceedingly wide-spread report that Paul Jones was actually the son of Lord Selkirk's gardener, George Paul, which appeared in numberless contemporary journals, is found in a number of a magazine entitled *Weekly Entertainer and West of England Miscellany*: "Paul Jones, born and bred on the estate of Lord Selkirk near Kircudbright, his father by name Paul, a steady methodist Scotchman, being head gardener to the Earl."

In a high mood of exultation over his surprise of the port of Whitehaven, which had been accomplished with impunity a few hours before, Paul Jones sailed up to the entrance of Kirkcudbright Bay and, marking the hour of full tide, to enable him to withdraw in safety, went off in a boat at the head of a party of his men and landed at the foot of the gardens of Saint Mary's Isle. There he himself waited, walking back and forth under the familiar trees. He was at once informed of Lord Selkirk's absence and would immediately have retired, but his men, wholly ignorant as they were of the real purpose and significance of his intentions, insisted on raiding the house and demanding the plate, according to the practice followed by English soldiers in America. They were led by Lieutenant Simpson and second Lieutenant Wallingsford, and, according to Lady Selkirk's account, behaved with perfect civility. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and the family had just finished breakfast. Descending to the parlor, Lady Selkirk addressed Lieutenant Simpson in the character of the leader of a press gang, which she had been informed had invaded her property. Simpson immediately undeceived her, and on his assertion that he was an officer of an American ship of war, and that it was his purpose to take possession of the plate, she very scrupulously collected all that the house contained and delivered it to the officer. The accompanying letter of the countess to her husband, one of several of which she wrote to Lord Selkirk and her sister, gives a naïve picture of the scene and a sympathetic impression of her character:

ST. MARY'S ISLE, *April 24th*, 1778.

The history of the invasion of the Americans not being very cleverly specified perhaps in yesterday's letters, I propose to give you a better account to-day, and by a letter I expect to-night shall judge where to send it. My dear Love, I cannot tell if you have heard of this matter or not, but you may read on without alarm, as you must judge by the beginning we are all well and at ease. On Wednesday morning Mrs. Wood and her daughters came here. On Thursday just after breakfast Daniel told me a press gang was in the Isle, and several of the gardeners had run from their work, I could not help it, a few minutes after they surrounded the house, the Commanding Officer desired to speak to me. I went down to the Parlor, Miss Elliott asked to go with me. I began to say something to him in the light I looked upon him. "Madam," said he, "we meant so to deceive you, but it is needless any longer, we belong to a frigate belonging to the States of America, our business was with the Lord of the House, to take him on board our prisoner, as he is absent our next orders are to demand all your plate, produce it directly, we are masters of this house and everything in it, it is needless to resist." "I am very sensible of that" said I,—called Daniel, told him what was wanted, ordered him to get it, and followed him to the pantry. Whether what I did after was right or wrong you must determine, I found Daniel filling one of the maid's aprons with whatever he could lift first to hide it, I made him lay it down again, resolving not to dispute or deny it to them, by which means they very deliberately called for sacks, put everything up, they now called, "Then where is the teapot and coffee pot?" I made them also be produced, they still insisted there was more. I assured them there was no more to the best of my knowledge, so they took up their booty, he next said



he had orders to walk through the house, he did so, but took nothing. Upon the whole, I must say they behaved civilly, the men on the outside of the house were each armed with a musket, and bayonet, two large pistols and a hanger, the doors were open, none of them offered to come in, nor asked for anything, everybody was out and asking questions, they said the orders given were to behave civilly and take nothing but plate. Of the two officers one was a civil young man in a green uniform, an anchor on his buttons, which were white, he came to the house in a blue great-coat, he was but second, the principal one was in blue, no uniform, and seemed by nature a very disagreeable, and one may say a bad man, had a vile blackguard look, still kept civil as well he might, but I should suspect might have been rough enough had he met with provocation, and that was one reason why I never left him, for the anger every one was in might have led them to say what was at all their tongue's ends. But if no accident had ensued, I now see some plate might have been saved, by leaving them to the servants, for they went nowhere below but the pantry, did not look sharp about there, and looked alarmed when they saw the bewildered crowd at the door of it. At going off they said they belonged to the *Ranger* frigate, Captain Paul Jones, Esquire, commander. While they were about the house John Archer made his escape, undeceived those met concerning their being a press gang, alarmed the town, too much indeed as they thought they had fired the house. Very soon a great multitude were in the Isle, and some few arms, but of no use to prevent their getting off, which I couldn't regret as bloodshed might have followed, and probably no good could have been done. We have seen no more of them. It was immediately known that this Paul Jones is one John Paul, born at Arbigland, who once com-

manded a Kirkcudbright vessel belonging to Mr. Muir and others, a great villain as ever was born, guilty of many crimes and several murders by ill usage, was tried and condemned for one, escaped, and followed a piratical life, till he engaged with the Americans. He seems to delight in that still, as robbing a house was below the dignity of the States of America. The sailors at the door told, their Captain was born at Berrick, knew my Lord, (whose name and the name of the place those in the house pretended ignorance of) had a great opinion of him, and for that reason had given orders that no more should be done.

Having refreshed themselves with a drink of Scotch whiskey, served by the reluctant Daniel, the major-domo of the castle, the party of raiders made a quiet retreat, and joining the captain, who was waiting for them on the shore, returned to the *Ranger*, which immediately sailed out of sight.

The alarm of this surprising occurrence spread instantly to the adjoining village of Kirkcudbright. Arms were distributed and an old gun levelled at a distant object, which in their terror the villagers took for a ship; it was discovered later to be a rock emerging from the water, and the discomfited defenders of their patron's home and property could only lament the waste of their ammunition and content themselves with expressions of horror and indignation at the deeds of the "rebel" and "marauder" whom they had known in his boyhood and alienated by unmerited obloquy and suspicion.

The letters of Lady Selkirk abound in the hostile and hearsay rumors in regard to Jones's early and unfort-

unate experiences with Mungo Maxwell and the mutineer, and reflect the generally accepted belief that the one-time John Paul was a very bad and dangerous character. The fact that Jones informed his men of his "acquaintance" with and high opinion of Lord Selkirk indicates that his delusion of a relationship with his Lordship was strongly in his mind at the time he made his descent upon the estate. Lady Selkirk was naturally ignorant either of any "acquaintance" or of any of the motives which inspired Jones's assertion.

No sooner departed on the *Ranger*, which was on the next day destined to win its victory over the *Drake*, Paul Jones bitterly regretted his action in permitting his men to carry off the plate, and immediately decided to return it. In many hours of careful composition he penned the following elaborate letter to the countess, in which he made his offer to return her property, and attempted in strange and affected phrases to explain himself and the motives of his action:

*Ranger*, BREST, 8th May, 1778.

MADAM:—

It cannot be too much lamented that in the profession of arms, the Officer of fine feelings, and of real sensibility, should be under the necessity of winking at any action of persons under his command, which his heart cannot approve. But the reflection is doubly severe when he finds himself obliged in appearance to countenance such Action by his authority. This hard case was mine when on the 23rd. of April last I landed on St. Mary's Isle. Knowing Lord Selkirk's interest with his King, and esteeming as I do his private Character,

I wished to make him the happy instrument of alleviating the horrors of hopeless captivity, when the brave are overpowered and made Prisoners of War. It was perhaps fortunate for you, Madam, that he was from home, for it was my intention to have taken him on board the *Ranger*, and to have detained him till thro' his means, a general and fair exchange of Prisoners as well in Europe as in America had been effected. When I was informed by some men whom I met at landing, that his Lordship was absent, I walked back to my boat determining to leave the Island; by the way, however, some officers who were with me could not forbear expressing their discontent, observing that in America no delicacy was shown by the English, who took away all sorts of movable property—setting fire not only to towns and to the Houses of the Rich, without distinction, but not even sparing the wretched hamlets and Milch cows of the poor and helpless at the approach of an inclement winter. That party had been with me as volunteers the same morning at Whitehaven, some complaisance therefore was their due. I had but a moment to think how I might gratify them, and at the same time do your Ladyship the least injury. I charged the two officers to permit none of the seamen to enter the house, or to hurt anything about it—to treat you, Madam, with the utmost Respect—to accept of the plate which was offered—and to come away without making a search or demanding anything else. I am induced to believe that I was punctually obeyed, since I am informed that the plate which they brought away is far short of the inventory which accompanied it. I have gratified my men, and when the plate is sold, I shall become the purchaser, and I will *gratify my own feelings* by restoring it to you, by such conveyance as you shall be pleased to direct. Had the Earl been on board the

*Ranger* the following Evening, he would have seen the awful Pomp and dreadful Carnage of a Sea Engagement, both affording ample subject for the Pencil, as well as melancholy reflection for the contemplative mind. Humanity starts back from such scenes of horror, and cannot but execrate the vile Promoters of this detested War.

For *they* t'was *they* unsheathed the ruthless blade,  
And Heaven shall ask the Havock it has made.

The British Ship of War, *Drake*, mounting 20 guns, with more than her full complement of Officers and Men, besides a number of Volunteers, came out from Carrickfergus, in order to attack and take the American Continental Ship of War, *Ranger*, of 18 guns, and short of her complement of Officers and Men. The Ships met, and the advantage was disputed with great fortitude on each side for an Hour and Five minutes, when the gallant Commander of the *Drake* fell, and Victory declared in favor of the *Ranger*. The amiable Lieutenant lay mortally wounded, besides near forty of the inferior officers and crew killed and wounded. A melancholy demonstration of the uncertainty of human prospects, and of the sad reverse of fortune which an hour can produce. I buried them in a spacious grave, with the Honours due to the memory of the Brave. Tho' I have drawn my sword in the present generous struggle for the Right of Men, yet I am not in Arms as an American, nor am I in pursuit of Riches. My fortune is liberal enough, having no wife nor family, and having lived long enough to know that Riches cannot ensure Happiness. I profess myself a citizen of the world, totally unfettered by the little mean distinctions of Climate or of Country, which diminish the benevolence of the Heart and set bounds

to Philanthropy. Before this War began I had at an early time of Life, withdrawn from the sea service, in favour of "calm contemplation and poetic ease," I have sacrificed not only my favorite scheme of Life, but the *softer affections of the Heart*, and my prospects of Domestic Happiness, and I am ready to sacrifice Life also with cheerfulness, if that forfeiture could restore peace and goodwill among mankind. As the feelings of your gentle bosom cannot but be congenial with mine, let me entreat you, Madam, to use your soft persuasive Arts with your Husband, to endeavor to stop this cruel and destructive War, in which Britain can never succeed. Heaven can never countenance the barbarous and unmanly Practices of the Britons in America, which Savages would blush at, and which if not discontinued will soon be retaliated in Britain by a justly enraged people. Should you fail in this, (and I am persuaded you will attempt it, and who can resist the power of such an Advocate?) your endeavors to effect a general Exchange of Prisoners, will be an Act of Humanity, which will afford you Golden Feeling on a Death bed. I hope this cruel contest will soon be closed, but should it continue, I wage no War with the Fair, I acknowledge their Power, and bend before it with profound Submission, let not therefore the amiable Countess of Selkirk regard me as an Enemy, I am ambitious of her esteem and Friendship, and would do anything consistent with my duty to merit it. The honor of a line from your hand in answer to this will lay me under a very singular obligation, and if I can render you any acceptable service in France, or elsewhere, I hope you see into my character so far as to command me without the least grain of reserve. I wish to know exactly the behavior of my people, as I determine to punish them if they have exceeded their Liberty.

I have the Honour to be with much Esteem and  
with profound Respect,

Madam,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,  
PAUL JONES.

This letter he posted on his return to Brest, and sent open for perusal to the Postmaster-General, Lord Despencer, with the request that it should be forwarded at once. The accompanying correspondence, including Lord Selkirk's letter to Paul Jones and to the Postmaster-General, with the latter's reply to Selkirk, give a very clear impression of the earl's character and of his opinion of the strange communication of Paul Jones's. Lord Despencer's letter expresses the general contemptuous opinion which was entertained of Paul Jones:

Lord Selkirk to Paul Jones (enclosed to Lord Despencer and returned by him):

À MONSIEUR,

MONSIEUR J. P. JONES,

*Capitaine du Vaisseau Americain, La Ranger,  
à Brest,*

DUMFRIES, *June 9th, 1778.*

SIR:—

The letter you wrote to Lady Selkirk of the 8th of May from Brest and enclosed to Lord Despencer, he was so good as to forward, and it came to hand t'other day, as also its duplicate by common post. It was matter of surprise both to my Wife and me, as no apology was expected for your landing from your Privateer at St. Mary's Isle on the 23rd. of April, but

as the letter is polite, and you seem very anxious for an answer, I shall therefore transmit this unsealed to Lord Despencer, who, as I have the honour to be well acquainted with him, will I hope excuse my giving him this trouble, and his Lordship, as Post Master General will judge whether or not it is proper to be forwarded to you, as a letter by common post would certainly be stopped at the London Office. Your lamenting the necessity of these things in the Profession of Arms, and of being obliged to gratify your Officers by permitting them to go to my house, and carry off some plate, and your expressing the great sensibility of your feelings at what your heart cannot approve, are things which we, who have no knowledge of you, nor of your character, but by report, can form no proper judgment of, but must leave to your own Conscience, and to the Almighty Judge of the real motives of all actions. You certainly are in the right, Sir, in saying that it was fortunate for Lady Selkirk that I was from home, as you intended to carry me off and detain me prisoner, for had that happened, I dread what might have been its effect upon my Wife, then well advanced in her pregnancy. I own I do not understand how a man of *Sensibility to fine feelings* could reconcile this to what his heart approved, especially as the carrying me off could have no possible effect for the purpose you mention which you say was, "knowing my interest with the King, your intention was to detain me, until through my means, a general and fair exchange of prisoners, as well in Europe as in America had been effected." Now, Sir, nothing can be more erroneous than these Ideas, for I have no interest whatever with the King, and am scarce known to him, being very seldom in London, scarce six months in whole, during these last one and twenty years. With regard to the King's Ministers, I neither have nor can have any interest with



them, as I have generally disapproved of most of their measures, and in particular of almost their whole conduct in the unhappy and illjudged American War. And as to a general exchange of Prisoners being effected through my means, I am altogether at a loss how any man of sense could entertain such an Idea. I am neither a Military nor a Ministerial Man. I neither have nor ever had a Ministerial office, Employment or Pension, nor any connection with Administration, nor am I in Parliament, and except having the disadvantage of a useless Scotch title, I am in all respects as much a Private Country Gentleman, as any one can be, living a retired life in the country, and engaging in no factions whatever. How then would it have been possible for such a man to effect a general exchange of Prisoners? When so many men of great power and influence in both houses of Parliament have not been able to bring it about. You must, therefore, be sensible on reflection, Sir, that you have proceeded on a very improper and mistaken notion, and that had your attempt succeeded, its only effect would have been to distress a family that never injured any person, and whose wishes have certainly been very friendly to the Constitutions and Just Liberties of America. You exclaim on the barbarities committed in America, and say they will be retaliated in Britain if not discontinued. I have always been extremely sorry at the accounts of these things, no man can be a greater enemy to all ungenerous inhumanities in war than I am. God knows best which side he began those things, and which has most to account for, but it is certainly the general opinion in Britain, that the American began the unusual and cruel practices complained of, and first against their own countrymen who adhered to the British Government. In your letter you profess yourself a Citizen of the World, and that you have drawn your sword in

support of the Rights of Man, yet you say you are not in arms as an American, nor in pursuit of Riches. If you are not in arms as an American, I do not understand in what character you act, and unless you have an American Commission, I doubt the laws of war and of nations would not be very favorable to you as a citizen of the World, which, however, ought to be a very honorable character, and you will do well to endeavor to act up to the humanity and honour of it. Consider then, Sir, the impropriety and danger to the Common Interests, and happiness of Society, in your departing from the established and usual practice of Modern War. Nothing does more honour to Mankind, than the generous humanity and mildness introduced in War of late ages, through all the best civilized parts of Europe, and its violation is always disapproved of and generally resented by the Ministers of every State. I am therefore persuaded that neither the French Government nor the Congress, would have countenanced your carrying me off, nor would have permitted me to be detained. Their own coasts are as much exposed to such enterprises as ours, and they will not wish to introduce such things into the practice of war, as can have no effect upon the great and general operations of it, but would only add to its calamities. It was certainly fortunate both for Lady Selkirk and me, that I was from home, and it was also fortunate for you, Sir, that your officers and men behaved well, for had any of my family suffered outrage, murder or violence, no quarter of the Globe should have secured you nor even some of those under whose commission you act, from my vengeance. But, Sir, I am happy that their welfare enables me to inform you, that the Orders you mention in your letter were punctually obeyed by your two Officers and Men, who in every respect behaved as well as could be expected on such an occasion. All the men remained on

the outside of the house, were civil and did no injury, the two officers alone came within, and behaved with civility, and we were all sorry to hear afterwards that the younger officer in green uniform was killed in your engagement with the *Drake*, for he in particular showed so much civility and so apparent a dislike at the business he was then on, that it is surprising how he should have been one of the proposers of it. What you mention is certainly so, that some of the Plate was left, but that was contrary to Lady Selkirk's intention and to her orders, but happened partly by accident, confusion and hurry, and partly by the improper inclinations of some servants, for which they were severely reprimanded afterwards. So much was it contrary to Lady Selkirk's intentions, that she, having met a servant carrying some Plate out of the way, ordered it instantly to be taken back and given up, and indeed her giving the inventory along with it, tho' not asked for, proves that she meant it all to go, as the inventory would only serve to show, what she would not have inclined to be known, had she intended or believed any was left, and indeed had your Officers taken time to examine it, they would have got all, by means of the inventory, but the only thing they observed wanting was a tea pot and coffee pot, and on mentioning it, the servant immediately brought them. This circumstance, however, proves also what I have pleasure in acknowledging, that your Officers obeyed your orders in making no search, for which, Sir, you are entitled to our thanks, and I most willingly give them. Tho' you say nothing improper about what was left, nor can Lady Selkirk be thought at all accountable for it, yet she chooses these things to be mentioned, as she said to your officers she believed it was all delivered, and she would be sorry if any person whatever should believe her capable of deceit. The little Plate that was

left, will seem greater by the inventory than it was in reality, of the six candle sticks left, two are of a very small old fashioned kind, and belonged to Lady Selkirk's Grandmother, and are not one-third of the weight of those now in fashion, the other two are little flat trifles made exceedingly small, for the purpose of standing in a cabinet for the purpose of sealing letters, the teaspoons and also some spoons of an inferior make, used at the housekeepers table, by not being kept in the Butler's Pantry were forgot, together with some other very small things of little value, all the larger things left were of the Birmingham plated kind. Your genteel offer, Sir, of returning the plate is very polite, but at the same time neither Lady Selkirk nor I can think of accepting it, as you must purchase it you say for that purpose, but if your delicacy makes you unwilling to keep that share of its value which as Captain you are entitled to, without purchasing, I would in that case wish that part to be given to those private men who were on the party, as an encouragement for their good behaviour. You, Sir, are entitled to what is more honorable, viz: the Praise of having your men under good discipline, which on all occasions I take care to make known.

Your most obedient servant,

SELKIRK.

Lord Selkirk to Lord Despencer:

MY LORD:

Your obliging attention in sending Lady Selkirk that strange letter of Apologies Jones wrote from Brest, has emboldened me to give you this additional trouble, and makes me take the liberty of enclosing to you my answer to him, which otherwise I should not know how to send. I presume there is no impropriety in allowing my letter to go on. I leave that to your better judg-

ment and knowledge. He is such an odd fellow by what I hear of him, (for we were perfectly unacquainted with him till his landing at my house) that it is not easy to know how to write to him, nor yet very proper to neglect answering him, since he is anxious to get one. You would see by his strange ridiculous bombast letter, that he is altogether an exotick character. I am not entirely convinced that he is the man that the people of this country say he is, if he is not that man, he seems to be an enthusiast, absurd and ignorant of the springs and moves of our affairs, and as such I would wish to convince him that he had no business to meddle with me, But if he is the man whom the people here believe him to be, he is both a dangerous and worthless fellow by all accounts I can hear of him. He is said to be a most cruel fellow, to have committed no less than three murders, and that in absconding from the West Indies after the last one, he fled to America, and so commenced heroic vindicator of the Rights of Mankind, and the Officer of fine feelings. I have made my letter to him intolerably long, but I could not well help it, unless I had given him a very short answer, which might have made him burn my house at his next trip to these coasts, but we should give the Devil his due, he certainly, be who he will, behaved well at my house, notwithstanding that some Plate was taken away. His letter was so long and so absurd, that it has forced me to be very diffuse also, and perhaps as absurd, to think of arguing with the Captain of a Privateer. If you do not send the letter, be so good as to return it, tho' I think there can be no harm in sending it.

I have the honor to be with much regard and esteem

Your Lordship's most obedient and most humble  
servant

SELKIRK.

From Lord Despencer to Lord Selkirk:

*June 22nd, 1778.*

MY LORD:

I am upon all occasions extremely desirous to obey your commands when I think I can do it with propriety, but I cannot help doubting, in the situation I am in, the propriety of my forwarding a letter to such a Rascal and Rebel as this Jones; a letter directed to him must of course be opened at the Post Office. This being the case, and my real sentiments, I hope your Lordship will excuse my returning you the letter you sent me to forward to such a person.

Your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

LE DESPENCER.

A long series of difficulties incident to the valuation of the plate delayed for several years its return. In the year 1779, before Jones's cruise in the *Bon Homme Richard*, he finally succeeded, with the help of Jonathan Williams, in getting it away from Mr. Schweighauser, the Continental agent at Nantes, but it was not until February 12, 1784, that Jones wrote to Lord Selkirk announcing that in consequence of the permission communicated to him through the latter's son, Lord Daer, he had ordered the plate to be forwarded to the care of Lord Selkirk's sister-in-law, the Countess of Morton, in London. "My sole inducement," he declared in this letter, "was to turn the attention of my men and stop their rage from breaking out and retalliating on your house and effects, the too wanton burnings and desolation that had been committed against their relatives and fellow citizens in

America by the British, of which I assure you you would have felt the severe consequences had I not fallen on an expedient to prevent it, and hurried my people away before they had time for further reflection. As you were so obliging as to say to Mr. Alexander that my people behaved with great decency at your house, I ask the favor of you to announce that circumstance to the public."

On the 4th of August, 1785, Lord Selkirk replied that the plate, after more than a year of further delay, had at last arrived in Scotland, and that he had announced its return, together with his acknowledgment of the good behavior of Jones's men to "many people of fashion, and on all occasions both now and formerly, I have done you the justice to tell that you made an offer of returning the plate very soon after your return to Brest."

The plate finally arrived at Castle Douglas intact, after its many wanderings, with the tea leaves still in the kettle, where even to this day it is offered to the inspection of any American visitors.

The correspondence relating to the celebrated raid is preserved in the strong-room of the castle, and copies of it have been presented by a descendant of Lord Selkirk to the Navy Department in Washington.

A very brief letter from Lord Daer to his father, written from Paris in the year 1791, relates his meeting with Jones at the house of the American envoy to Paris, with an expression of surprise that the black-browed marauder was in reality so quiet and estimable an individual.

Lord Daer to Lord Selkirk:

PARIS, *April 20th*, 1791.

I was carried to-day to take a dinner at Mr. Short's the American Envoy to this Kingdom. I met there Thomas Paine, the author of "The Rights of Man" and Paul Jones. This latter and I had two hours in the room, walking, and at dinner, before either of us knew who the other was. After dinner we were introduced, I made him a speech from you, expressive of your obligations to him, for the order in which his men were kept at the landing. I told him how you had first answered his letter. He said he had got your second, and began apologizing for not having answered it. I told him there was no occasion, it had not been expected he should. He seems a sensible little fellow. He is not dark as I had heard. He acknowledged he was from Britain, but said he was *settled* in America before the war began, and it was then his country. I did not ask him from what part of the kingdom.

Yours affectionately,

DAER.

Whatever effect Lord Selkirk's extremely sincere epistles might have eventually produced upon Paul Jones, with their evident and entire unconsciousness of any personal knowledge of his correspondent, Jones clearly retained at the time of his letter to Franklin in March, 1779, his long-cherished belief in some connection with the Selkirk family.

In the winter of 1780, in reply to a request of the Baron Van der Capellen for a public declaration in regard to his relationship with Lord Selkirk, he stated that "he had no obligation to Lord Selkirk, except for his good opinion, and that neither himself or his imme-



diate family were known to the earl except by reputation."

After the close of the Revolution, during his sojourn in Paris, from 1784 to 1786, he dwelt in the same lodging with the author of the already quoted letter in the *American Literary Magazine*, and to him made his final statement that he was the son of George Paul, Lord Selkirk's gardener. Having been ultimately disabused by the character of Lord Selkirk's later epistles, and doubtless by further information concerning the well-known facts of Lord Selkirk's absence from Saint Mary's Isle during the years preceding and following his birth, Jones had finally been compelled to abandon his belief in his aristocratic descent and to conclude that the Duke of Queensbury's unusual interest did not imply any relation to the Selkirk family.

The statements of Jones himself in regard to his service in the British navy, definitely contained in his letter to Morris, and the unquestionable suggestion of his relationship to Lord Selkirk in the letter to Franklin, exist in his own handwriting, and are therefore evidence of an unimpeachable kind. The significance of Mrs. Birnie's suggestion as to the irregularity of his birth is likewise highly important, as she was in a position to know the facts from her immediate family.

Jones's statement to his fellow-lodger rests on the authority of a reviewer of a perfectly reliable publication, and the internal evidence of veracity in the written statement of his informant. It is the only statement coming from Jones himself in regard to his paternity. Taken in consideration with the accounts

in the Chase narrative and those of Colonel Green in regard to the utterances of Jones to his friends in North Carolina, the above collection of testimony of a mutually confirmatory character bearing upon his early belief that he was related to the Selkirk family can admit of little question.

Without the determining motive which Jones himself so long believed to have actuated the protection and favor of the Duke of Queensbury, it is evident that this unusual attitude must have arisen from the Duke's recognition of the remarkable promise of the child whom he found in the garden at Saint Mary's Isle.

Wholly unaware, as both Lord and Lady Selkirk unquestionably were, of the delusion existing in Paul Jones's mind as to the connection with their family, the strange letter which they received from an individual known only to them through the disparaging reports current in the adjoining village and county of Kirkcudbright, must always have been entirely incomprehensible. Lord Selkirk's letters are those of a singularly honest and high-minded person, anxious to do full justice to the much-despised man who had dealt so surprisingly with his property. The obscure psychology of the mind from which emanated the epistle to Lady Selkirk is worth analysis. The first and ruling passion of Paul Jones was ambition; this ambition, abnormal in its intensity, was the motive-power which determined his career.

While yet of tender years he abandoned his position in the royal navy for lack of opportunities of quick advancement. This same ambition, combined with great

capacity, procured him the position of mate and commander of trading-vessels while he was still exceedingly youthful, and after disastrous adventures and reverses brought about his astonishing advancement to his conspicuous place in the United States navy.

Ambition, working unhindered upon his immensely vigorous imagination, built the delusion of an aristocratic extraction upon circumstantial evidence, wholly devoid of definite facts. From his self-love and burning determination to force his own valuation of himself into public recognition grew the extraordinary conception of carrying off his supposed father as a captive and the no less extraordinary address to Lady Selkirk.

From the height to which his untrammelled fancy had raised him he announced himself as the impartial defender of the insulted rights of human nature, declaring himself "totally unfettered by the little mean distinctions of climate or of country." Bearing the American flag, he went so far as to state that he was not in arms as an American, an expression in actual disagreement with his unquestioned devotion to the "country of his fond election" and with the facts. This unsympathetic declaration can only be explained by the torturing consciousness of his attitude toward his native land, and of the public odium which he realized he had thereby incurred.

Together with this deep-lying consciousness, forcing him into the impartial position of a "citizen of the world," were the long and bitter reflections of his youth upon the stigma of illegitimacy and the later and undeserved obloquy which had made his name a

byword of contempt in his home and driven him into exile.

These were the sources from which emerged, in the poetic phraseology of the period, this curious apologia for his character and motives which has for so many years puzzled the students of his character.

He was exceedingly proud of the carefully turned phrases; sent the letter open to the Postmaster-General to insure its official recognition, and furnished many copies to his valued friends. Without his extraordinary passion for distinction Paul Jones would never have emerged from the obscure and unfortunate conditions of his birth; but the attack upon Lord Selkirk's estate, together with the strange letter which resulted from it, remain as the fantastic error and the culminating extravagance of the tyrant motive which enslaved him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a report to the board of admiralty of the year 1781 is found the following reference to his descent upon Saint Mary's Isle:

"I landed the day after in Scotland in order to take some nobleman prisoner as a hostage for the good treatment and exchange of our countrymen in England. The Earl of Selkirk lived near the shore, and it was my intention to take him."

This unnecessary disclaimer of any especial interest in this particular nobleman is very significant in its disagreement with Jones's habitual and transparent frankness. Having known Saint Mary's Isle since his childhood, it would have been far more natural if he had assigned this familiarity as the reason of his choice of Lord Selkirk as a hostage.

## CHAPTER XII

### SIMPSON

THE weather, fortunately, remained moderate for twenty-four hours after the engagement with the *Drake*, so that Jones was able to refit the two ships and get them in readiness for the return voyage to Brest. These necessary preparations did not prevent the victorious captain from capturing a Whitehaven brigantine, which out of curiosity had ventured too near the *Ranger* and her prize. The weather soon became unfavorable and the wind rose and shifted to the north. Jones therefore determined to give up his design of returning as he came, by Saint George's Channel, and steered a northerly course with the purpose of rounding the coast of Ireland. This brought him off Belfast Lough toward nightfall of the day following the battle. "It was now time," he relates, "to release the honest Irishmen whom I took here on the twenty-first, and as the poor fellows had lost their boat, she having sunk, in the late stormy weather, I was happy in my power to give them the necessary sum to purchase everything new which they had lost. I gave them also a good boat to transport themselves ashore, and sent with them two infirm men, on whom I bestowed the last guinea in my possession to defray their traveling expenses to their proper home in Dublin. They took with them

one of the *Drake's* sails, which would sufficiently explain what had happened to the volunteers. The grateful Irishmen were enraptured, and expressed their joy in three huzzas as they passed the *Ranger's* quarter."

Jones's invariable humanity to his prisoners, as shown in the case of the Canadian fishermen, whom he had furnished with a ship to transport them across the Northern ocean after he had effected the destruction of the enemy's fisheries at Canso, was again shown in his kindness to these Irishmen as well as in a very courteous letter which he wrote at this time to inform the relations of Lieutenant Dobbs of the circumstances of his death, which occurred two days after the capture of the *Drake*.

On the 20th Jones placed his first lieutenant, Simpson, in command of the *Drake*, with careful instructions to keep close to the *Ranger*, to assist him in any encounter with British ships, and in case of unavoidable separation from his consort, to steer directly to the port of Brest. The *Drake*, however, was in tow of the *Ranger* during the passage around the northern coast of Ireland, the two vessels pursuing their course without incident until the morning of the 5th of May, when they were off Ushant. Jones then perceived a strange sail at a short distance, and ordering the hawser cut which attached him to the *Drake*, started off alone in pursuit of the prize. Finding that it was a Swede, he immediately turned back to rejoin the *Drake*, but instead of waiting for the *Ranger*, the *Drake* hauled close by the wind, so that when the *Ranger* hailed her she was nearly out of sight. Owing to this unexpected circum-

stance, Jones was unable to chase a number of large merchant-ships, which sailed by him into the channel, being compelled to run after the *Drake*, which still steered her course away from him. Toward noon the *Ranger* came up nearly abreast of the *Drake*, but considerably to leeward, when the wind shifted, and the *Drake* again showed her heels to her pursuer. Jones flew his signals in vain during the afternoon and all through the night, and when morning dawned gave chase to a sail which he perceived at a very great distance. The vessel showed no intention of speaking the *Ranger*, although, as Jones afterward learned, she was recognized and her signals plainly seen. Jones finally succeeded in coming up with the fleeing ship, when he discovered that she was no other than the truant *Drake*. Exceedingly angry over his lost time, exasperated at length by this last exhibition of insubordination, and no doubt fortified by his recent successes, he now suspended Simpson for disobedience of orders, and put his second lieutenant, Elijah Hall, in command of the *Drake*. This entirely justifiable action was destined to involve him in many complications and clouded the pleasure of his success.

On the evening of the 8th of May the two ships arrived finally off the mouth of Brest harbor. Jones had brought in as many as two hundred prisoners, and his first concern was to insure by an equal exchange the release of the American captives who had long been languishing in the British military jails. His first act on landing at Brest was to pay an early morning visit to his friend Count D'Orvilliers, to consult with him as

to the best methods of avoiding any miscarriage of his purpose. D'Orvilliers welcomed him with great cordiality, and, although considering that he was bound to announce the capture of the English prisoners and the result of Jones's cruise to his government, which he did by letter on this very day, he advised Jones to forestall any possible interference with the execution of his plans by equipping the *Drake* with all speed, and sending the prisoners off to America before any answer could arrive from Paris. The ill-advised policy of releasing English prisoners on parole, without assurance of exchange, had rendered all Franklin's earnest efforts for the release of the American captives quite ineffectual. This policy had been followed by the captains of the American cruisers in Europe, for the reason that they had no funds with which to maintain their prisoners. Jones was determined to make a better use of the two hundred he had captured, and had no intention of letting one of them go without exchange.

His first letter to the commissioners was written immediately after his consultation with D'Orvilliers:

*Ranger*, BREST, May 9th, 1778.

GENTLEMEN:

I have the honor to acquaint you that I arrived here last night and brought in with me the British ship of war *Drake*, of 20 guns, with English colors inverted under the American stars. I shall soon give you the particulars of my cruise; in the meantime you will see some account of it in a letter of this date from Count D'Orvilliers to Monseigneur de Sartine. I have brought in two hundred prisoners, and as Comte D'Orvilliers is apprehensive that as war with England is



not yet declared, they may perhaps be given up without exchange, I have resolved to equip the *Drake* with all possible expedition at Cammeret, and to send the prisoners in her to America, so fully am I convinced of the bad policy of releasing prisoners, especially seamen, without an exchange, that I am determined never to do it while there remains an alternative. I should not, however, have taken a resolution of such importance without consulting with you, had not Comte D'Orvilliers told me that the return of a letter from the Minister might perhaps put it out of my power, and therefore recommended me that I should lose no time.

Notwithstanding this, you will perhaps find it expedient to endeavor to effect an exchange of those prisoners in Europe, and should the Minister agree to hold them avowedly as prisoners of war, you will of course inform me thereof per express, so as to reach me if possible before the departure of the *Drake*.

I have suspended and confined Lieutenant Simpson for disobedience of orders. I have only time at present to add that I have the honor to be, with much esteem and respect, Gentlemen,

Your very obliged, very obedient, very humble servant,  
JOHN PAUL JONES.

This letter, with its very natural pride in the hitherto unprecedented capture of an English man-of-war, and its glowing reference to the American flag, furnishes a far more consistent and genuine expression of Paul Jones's real devotion to the country of his "fond election" than the strange self-conscious rhodomontade of the epistle so lately penned to Lady Selkirk.

As no express arrived to inform him of the commissioners' will in regard to the disposition of his prisoners, and as he was anxious already to find the funds with

which to maintain them, and to clothe and feed his crew, Jones wrote to Franklin on the 16th to announce that he had that day drawn on the commissioners, in favor of M. Bersolle, a bill of 24,000 livres. He was further impelled to this action by the intelligence communicated to him by the French authorities that the sale of the *Ranger's* prizes was likely to be indefinitely delayed by the claims of the admiralty board at Brest. His confidence in the support of the representatives of his government, and his continued regard for the welfare of the men who had so reluctantly aided him in his cruise, were both destined to severe and afflicting disillusionment. The commissioners declined to honor his bill, and his officers and crew, with scarcely an exception, sympathized with Simpson and wrote to the commissioners to protest against his imprisonment.

Again, as in the case of his supersedure in rank, Paul Jones was destined to receive blows instead of laurels, and "roses" which he complained "had a superabundance of thorns." His feelings in regard to his rebuff at the hands of the commissioners are expressed in the continuation of his detailed account of the cruise sent on the 27th. No reply had arrived in answer to his letters of the 9th and 16th, nor was there any indication that any report had reached the commissioners through D'Orvilliers's letter to Sartine, although the latter had replied to D'Orvilliers. "M. Bersolle," Jones writes to the commissioners, "has this moment informed me of the fate of my bills, the more extraordinary, as I have made no use of your letter of credit of the 10th of January last, whereby I then

seemed entitled to call for half the amount of my last draft, and I did not expect to be thought extravagant when on the 16th current I doubled that demand. I cannot, however, be silent when I find the public credit in the same disgrace. I conceive this might have been prevented. To make me completely wretched M. Bersolle has told me that he now holds his hand, not only of the necessary articles to refit the ship, but also of the daily provisions. I know not how to find to-morrow's dinner for the great number of mouths that depend on me for food. Are the Continental ships of war to depend on their prizes for a daily dinner for their men? Publish it not in Gath. My officers as well as men want clothes, and the prizes are precluded from being sold before further orders from the Minister. I will ask you, gentlemen, if I have deserved all this? I am unwilling to think that you have intentionally involved me in this sad dilemma at a time when I ought to expect some enjoyment."

It is evident that Jones would have been wiser had he availed himself first of the letter of credit for 500 "Loudores," which he already had in his hands, and then sent an account of his further expenses and necessities to the commissioners. This letter of credit was actually written by Arthur Lee himself and that troublesome gentleman would have been compelled to honor it.

Jones's natural elation at his unprecedented success and his earnest desire to please the disaffected officers and men of the *Ranger*, coupled with his belief that he was entitled to call for twice the amount of his letter of

credit, after his cruise had been successfully completed, and twice the number of months had elapsed for which this letter of credit was supposed to suffice, furnish the excuse and explanation of his act. The difficulties which this very pardonable indiscretion brought upon him were many, and were complicated by reasons of which he was then unaware. The commissioners were exceedingly embarrassed for funds, but Franklin would unquestionably have found some means of relieving his immediate necessities if his hands had not been tied temporarily by the radical change which had taken place at Passy, owing to the arrival of John Adams, on April the 1st, to take the place of Silas Deane.

Adams was, at least at this time, in sympathy with Arthur Lee, and Lee's policy of suspicion and obstruction was now in control. Adams belonged to the New England party in Congress, who were secretly opposed to both Washington and Franklin and jealous of their power. He was supported very strongly by the powerful Lee brothers in this attitude, and they represented a dangerous opposition to the great constructive leaders who were laboring not only for the independence but the permanent establishment of the new nation.

A glance at the secret journals of the Continental Congress, now open to public perusal, with their records of the small majorities which defeated the Conway cabal, and the attempts of the Lees to place their brother Arthur in sole control in Paris, furnish a terrifying retrospect of the dangers which nearly dethroned Washington in America and Franklin in Europe, and

narrowly failed of destroying the usefulness of the great leaders in the republic at the moment of its birth. John Adams was afterward convinced of Lee's malicious inefficiency, but now distinctly supported him in the acts which were prompted by the latter's insane jealousy and suspicion. A sweeping reform was instituted in the business methods of the commissioners' office at Passy by Adams, at the instigation of Lee, and a minute examination of accounts was made and changes brought about which Franklin himself punctiliously aided and abetted.<sup>1</sup>

Jonathan Williams, holding his appointment as Continental agent at Nantes under the authority of the commissioners, was dismissed, with his uncle's concurrence, on the peremptory order of Adams and Lee; and Lee's brother, William, who had been informed by an unconfirmed private letter to Deane from a member of Congress, that that body had appointed him, with direct and superior authority, to the post of Continental agent, was sent to Nantes to supersede Jonathan Williams and to investigate his papers. William Lee spent a couple of months at Nantes, and then departed, leaving one Schweighauser, a foreign merchant and a most troublesome and venial Jew, in charge of the American affairs at the French port. John Ross's bills were also held up, and it was entirely natural, under such a sweeping régime of investigation and suspicion,

<sup>1</sup> Franklin's accounts when presented to Congress were found to show a discrepancy of exactly three cents, and those of Jonathan Williams, still preserved by his descendants, were also found to be without error. His commissions for the sale of prizes were exactly half the sum of Schweighauser's.

that Paul Jones, at the moment of his hard-won success, should come in for his share of the trouble.

Other unfortunate circumstances which probably influenced Franklin's concurrence in the rebuff which was dealt out to Jones were the arrival of Simpson's complaint at his imprisonment, supported by the entire ship's crew, and the non-arrival of any account of expenditures to explain Jones's draft, or of any official report of his cruise. It does not appear why none of Jones's letters had reached Passy, but the first communication from the commissioners, dated the 23d, written throughout in the autograph of Arthur Lee, is significant of his temporary ascendancy and is frankly hostile and mandatory in tone:

TO CAPTAIN PAUL JONES

SIR:—

We have heard of your arrival at Brest with a prize, and are surprised that you have not given us an account of that, and of your other proceedings. We desire that you will not take any measures relative to the prize and prisoners, you may have made, except in securing them, nor incur any considerable expense without our orders.

Upon receipt of this, you will immediately send us an account of what you have done upon your cruise; of what your prizes consist of; what repairs you want; and what further measures you propose to pursue. Upon all these subjects you will wait our directions. Lieutenant Simpson has stated to us your having put him under arrest for disobeying orders. As a Court Martial must by order of Congress consist of three Captains, three Lieutenants, and three captains of Marines, and these cannot be had here, it is our desire

that he may have a passage procured for him by the first opportunity to America, allowing him whatever may be necessary for his defence. As the consequences of an arrest in foreign countries are thus extremely troublesome, they should be well considered before they are made.

This was scant recognition for the brilliant success which Jones had achieved at such risk and with such a singular display of his sole courage and pertinacity.

The next communication which was despatched to him from the commissioners was the letter of the 26th, which announced the refusal of his bill. This document was not the sole work of Lee, but was inscribed in the autograph of Adams and signed by all three of the commissioners. It contained a brief acknowledgment of his services, congratulating him on his "success and safe arrival at Brest," as well as on the "honor you have acquired by your conduct." It informed him that a new Continental agent had replaced his friend Williams at Nantes, and that all applications for his expenses should be made through Schweighauser. The new appointee of Arthur Lee showed not the slightest inclination to attend to his duties, and Jones found himself in a very critical condition of poverty and distress. He applied to Comte D'Orvilliers and the Intendant of the Marine at Brest, as well as to the Duc de Chartes, who lent him the necessary money on his own personal credit; and thus relieved by his French friends, when his own government had left him in the lurch, he was able to feed his prisoners and his crew. Jones was tempted to publish the reasons for his

extraordinary predicament, but wisely refrained, contenting himself with pouring out his indignation privately in various letters to his friends, expressed with his characteristic freedom and force.

"That America should suffer this damned disgrace," he wrote to Doctor Bancroft, "in the presence of the French fleet, and the knowledge of every officer and person here, covers me with shame. None of my prizes can be sold, and my officers and men want the withal to cover their nakedness. Mr. Williams I expect will be with you when this appears; he will not forget his suffering friend at Brest." To Carmichael and Ross, and Williams himself, he also wrote, thanking the last named for his sympathetic letter, and avowing that he was in great need of such "cordial drops." "I am so ashamed," he confessed, "that I have thought of shutting myself up, except that it would appear that I deserved it,—Perhaps, my friend, you will bring fair weather and sunshine, or take me in tow until I can repair my rigging." About the commissioners' letter he wrote: "I wish you could see a letter of the 25th ult. spun from the brains of Arthur Lee, the Commissioners all sign it, tho' the first, (Franklin) is the last, and the last, (Lee) is the first. I know that the letter is not of Franklin's dictation." In a few days, an encouraging and complimentary epistle arrived from Franklin, which showed that Jones's powerful ally was still in sympathy with him and secretly engaged in his behalf. The reference it contained to Jones's letter to Lady Selkirk, coming from the pen of the author of the "Autobiography," showed an indulgent comprehension



of Jones's chivalric intentions. What Franklin really thought of the literary style of this bombastic example of the philosophical jargon of the eighteenth century, does not appear.

PASSY, *May 27th*, 1778.

DEAR SIR:—

I received yours of the 18th enclosing one for the Countess of Selkirk, which I forwarded this day by the way of Holland, as you desire. It is a gallant letter, and must give her ladyship a high and just opinion of your generosity and nobleness of mind. The Jersey Privateers do us a great deal of mischief by intercepting our supplies. It has been mentioned to me that your small vessel commanded by so brave an officer, might render great service by following them where greater ships dare not venture their bottoms, or being accompanied and supported by some frigates from Brest at the proper distance, might draw them out and take them. I wish you to consider this, as it comes from high authority, and that you would immediately let me know what you think of it, and when your ship would be ready. I have written to England about the exchange of your prisoners. I congratulate you most cordially on your late success, and wish for a continuance and increase of the honor you have acquired. It will always be a pleasure to me to contribute what may lie in my power towards your advancement, and that of the brave officers under your command.

This word of praise from Franklin produced the happy result of instantly calming Jones's irritation and restoring to him his equanimity; such had been the influence of his friend Hewes in allaying the tormenting sense of injury which followed his supersedure in rank;

such was invariably the result of the lightest word of sympathy or commendation from any friend in whom he believed.

The plan of decoying the Jersey privateers was calculated to redound but little to Jones's credit, although accompanied with considerable danger; but with his characteristic disinterestedness he signified his readiness to carry it out, sending by return post a careful letter filled with wise suggestions as to the best methods of successfully carrying out the plan, and saying that he wished to render "essential services to the cause of America in any measure which might be considered expedient."

A few days later the tide of his very natural indignation at the treatment he had received from the commissioners had so far subsided that he was able to send them a very candid letter of explanation and apology for his unauthorized draft. "I frankly ask your pardon for the liberty I took the 16th ult. when I ventured to sign a draft upon you for the purpose of supplying the people under my command with necessary clothing. I hope that you do not impute to me a desire to receive presents of the public's money. On the contrary, I need not now assert that I stepped forth at the beginning, from nobler motives. My accounts before I left America, testify that I am more than 1500 pounds in advance for the public service, exclusive of any concern with the sloop of war *Ranger*, and as for wages, I never received any. The rules whereby Congress have been pleased to command me to regulate my conduct in the Navy, authorize me to issue my warrant to the

agent, and I humbly conceive that it is his province to furnish me with an estimate of the amount of expenses."

In this way Jones very properly reminded the commissioners, with a view to enlightening Lee in particular, of his own direct relations with Congress. He also observed with point that all disagreeable altercations would have been avoided if they had written to inform him of their determination to change the Continental agent, and complained that the new incumbent of the office had failed to be present at Brest to conduct the necessary sale of prizes or to send any representative.

The first-fruits of Lee's reform were not particularly successful. It is interesting to record that Bersolle's accounts were properly paid, after Bersolle himself had laid his complaint before the French minister of marine, and that Jones himself was also supplied directly with funds for the necessities of his crew.

The long account of his cruise had meanwhile reached Franklin, giving at last a full idea of the real value of his achievements and of his unique abilities, with the result that Franklin began at once to provide the fullest possible opportunities for their further use. He now availed himself secretly of his unimpaired influence with the French court, and having received Sartine's assurance that the King would favor his wishes, on the 1st of June he sent off to Jones a letter in which he held out to him the prospect of the long-coveted command of the *Indien*:

"I have the pleasure of informing you," he wrote, "that it is proposed to give you the command of the

great ship we have built at Amsterdam. By what you wrote us formerly, I have ventured to say in your behalf that this proposition would be agreeable to you. You will immediately let me know your resolution, which that you may be more clear in taking, I must inform you of some circumstances. She is at present the property of the King, but as there is no war yet declared, you will have the commission and flag of the United States, and act under their orders and laws. The Prince de Nassau will make the cruise with you. She is to be brought here under cover as a French Merchantman, to be equipped and manned in France. We hope to exchange your prisoners for as many American sailors, but if that fails, you have your present crew, to be made up here with other nations and French. The other commissioners are not acquainted with this proposition as yet, and you see by the nature of it that it is necessary to be kept secret till we have got the vessel here, for fear of difficulties in Holland and interruption. You will therefore direct your answer to me alone, it being desired that at present the affair rest between you and me. Perhaps it may be best for you to take a trip up here to concert matters, if in general you approve the idea.

"I was much pleased with reading your journal which we received yesterday." . . .

Jones replied to this thrice welcome epistle by return post: "I cannot but be deeply sensible of the honor conferred upon me by the proposition," he declared, "and I really think it affords a fair prospect of success. I shall be happy in opportunities to prove by my con-

duct how much I wish to meet the continuance of your confidence, and that of the Prince."

On the 10th Doctor Franklin wrote again, confirming the promise of the *Indien*, and suggested the possibility that the lately arrived *Providence* frigate, under Captain Whipple, would join Jones in the cruise. He asked him to come up to Versailles without delay, to consult with the commissioners and the French authorities. He gave Jones a hint of the dissatisfaction of Adams and Lee in regard to the insubordination on the *Ranger*, and the protection afforded its captain by himself, and concluded with an expression of well-merited confidence and esteem. "The project of giving you this ship pleases me the more as it is a probable opening to the higher preferment you so justly merit."

In obedience to these direct orders Jones now proceeded to Paris, where he became immediately the centre and bone of contention between the opposing commissioners. It is interesting to observe, by the conflicting character of the letters addressed to him from Passy, the attitude of Adams and Lee as contrasted with that of Franklin. Lee found no difficulty in influencing Adams in his hostile and disparaging attitude toward Jones, for the latter's sectional prejudice was already very definitely directed against him. The New England statesman consistently resented the preferment which Jones had acquired through the North Carolina member of the marine committee, Mr. Hewes, and referred to Jones as an "emigrant foreigner from the South." Lee, in a letter to the committee of foreign affairs, entirely omitted to mention any of Jones's

accomplishments, and compared the victorious *Ranger* with Conyngham's ship, which the latter had seen fit to withdraw from European service without orders, saying that he "fears the *Ranger* will share the fate of the *Revenge*." He enclosed in this same letter a communication severely criticising Jones, signed by the majority of his crew, and said that "the Commissioners had done all in their power to bring him and his officers to order, but hitherto in vain."

In spite of this hostility Jones succeeded in establishing favorable relations with the French minister of marine, and the prospect of procuring the Amsterdam ship, with its promise of an adequate command, greatly encouraged him. It had been reported that the *Indien* was already in deep water, and would be ready for service without delay, but when the Prince of Nassau went to Holland to take possession of her, he found these representations unfounded. He reported that it would still be three months before the ship could be launched, and also made known the objections of the Dutch Government to permitting the ship to be used against England. The Prince of Nassau was not of the calibre to get anything done which required practical ability. Collaterally related to the French royal family, and possessed of a restless love of adventure, he had been granted the opportunity of sailing with Jones in the projected cruise, but the choice of him as a messenger to the Dutch Government, by the French court, was an unwise one, and the negotiation, which demanded a diplomatic talent far beyond the capacity of this roving paladin, failed of success.

In later years, in Russia, Jones was destined to be associated with this prince; he found him a false and treacherous companion in arms, and had great reason to regret the unfortunate connection.

The news of the engagement of the *Belle Poule* with the *Arethusa*, with its indication of the rapid approach of open hostilities between France and England, now further added to the embarrassment which the minister was under at the reluctance of the Dutch Government to release the *Indien*, and Jones saw that he must definitely abandon his hopes of obtaining the vessel. Realizing at this juncture that the main purpose of his coming to Europe was not to be fulfilled, he now proposed to return without delay to America, hoping to get the command of some one of the new ships which had been built by the home government. He requested the commissioners to permit him to sail without delay, and orders to that effect were issued to him on the 16th of June.

Jones now wrote an admirable letter to his disaffected crew, announcing that he had arranged on the instant of his arrival at Versailles for the free sale of the prizes, and promising his homesick men a speedy return to America. He wrote that he hoped this good news would be published in the ship, for the "general happiness and satisfaction," and said that he would soon be able to convince every person under his command that he took "particular pleasure in making them rich and happy." This posture of affairs was destined, however, to last but a few days. The French court again intervened and requested the commis-

sioners to detain Jones in Europe to act under their orders.

It was now necessary to find another captain for the *Ranger*, and the commissioners decided to appoint a Mr. Livingston to take her back to America; but Jones, who had meanwhile been informed by his friend Jonathan Williams that Simpson was willing to make apologies and concessions, and who never did things by halves, now intervened in behalf of his disobedient officer, and persuaded the commissioners to give him the command of the ship. As a matter of fact, a far more rigorous imprisonment of Simpson had been brought about by the extravagant behavior of the culprit than had been originally contemplated by Jones himself. Placed in nominal confinement upon the *Drake*, and given a good state-room and freedom to walk the deck, he had so increased the insubordination of the crew by his assertions that Jones was responsible for the detention of their prize-money, that they again became mutinous and disobeyed orders with boldness and frequency. When D'Orvilliers recommended placing the English prisoners upon the *Drake*, it was necessary to provide other quarters for Simpson, and he was transferred to the *Admiral*, a French ship, where he was allowed the same liberties as before. Here, however, his expressions of insubordination were so extravagant and surprising to the French commander, that he advised Jones of the immediate necessity of placing him in close confinement on shore. In this situation Jones paid Simpson's expenses out of his own pocket, and then voluntarily released him on parole.



Influenced, as he undoubtedly was, by the kindly counsels of his friends Franklin and Williams, upon his arrival in Passy, and believing in the sincerity of Simpson's conciliatory messages, he now determined to let the matter drop entirely, and wrote as follows to the commissioners: "I am willing to let the dispute between us drop forever, by giving up his parole; I bear no malice, and if I have done him an injury, this will make him all present satisfaction in my power. If, on the contrary, he has injured me, I will trust him for acknowledgment."

The magnanimity of this action was ill-appreciated by its recipient, and Jones lived to bitterly regret his impulsive confidence and good nature.

The command of the *Ranger* being now, as Jones supposed, satisfactorily arranged, he announced himself as ready to receive the orders of M. de Sartine, and wrote to him as follows:

PASSY, *July 17th*, 1778.

M. DE SARTINE,

*My Lord:—*

I should be ungrateful did I not return my thanks for your kind and generous intentions in my favor. My greatest ambition would be to merit your future approbation, by my services against the common enemy of France and America. Had your first plan taken effect, the most pleasing prospect of success would have been before me. But that now seems a distant object.

I have no doubt but that many projects, which would promise success, might be formed from the hints I had the honor of sending lately for your inspection. Had

I been entrusted with the chief command, I would have been responsible for the consequences.

I am bound in honor to communicate faithfully to Congress the generous offer which the King now makes of lending the *Epervier*, in the meantime to be employed under my command and under the flag of the United States of America. I would thankfully have accepted this offer the moment it was communicated to me, had no difficulties have occurred on account of the situation of the American funds. I have now under my command a ship bound to America. On my arrival there, from the former confidence of Congress, I have reason to expect an immediate removal into one of their best ships. I have reason, also, to expect the chief command of the first squadron destined for an expedition. I have in my possession several similar appointments, and when Congress sees fit to appoint admirals, I have assurances that my name will not be forgot.

These are flattering prospects to a man who has drawn his sword only from motives of philanthropy, and in support of the dignity of human nature. But, as I prefer a solid to a shining reputation—a useful to a splendid command—I hold myself ready, with the approbation of the American Commissioners at Paris, to be governed by you in any measures that may tend to distress and humble the common enemy.

I have the honor to be &c.

J. P. JONES.

The French Government was now rapidly maturing plans for a general attack upon the naval forces of England, and a great fleet of thirty ships of war was assembled at Brest, awaiting the actual declaration of hostilities. Jones requested to be permitted to join the

fleet as a volunteer under the command of his good friend Count d'Orvilliers, hoping to profit by the lessons in naval strategy and in the management of large forces, which D'Orvilliers was very willing to afford him, but the minister replied that, although the King appreciated his offer, his desire was to employ him in a manner more useful to the allied powers. Jones then, at Sartine's request, submitted the papers he had already drawn up for the commissioners, in which various plans for descents upon the coasts of England were laid out:

Plan for Expeditions submitted by Com. Jones to the  
American Plenipotentiaries, and to the French  
Minister of Marine.

PASSY, *June 5, 1778.*

As the first proposed will be impeded for some time, in the interval a great variety of projects present themselves, some of which might prove of great utility to France and America by distressing the common enemy at a small expense.

Three very fast sailing frigates, with one or two tenders, might enter the Irish Channel, and burn at Whitehaven from two to three hundred ships, besides the town which contains 50,000 inhabitants; this would render it difficult, if not impossible, to supply Ireland with coal the ensuing winter.

The same force would be sufficient to take the bank of Ayr in Scotland and destroy the town, or perhaps the whole shipping in the Clyde with the towns and stores of Greenock and Port Glasgow, provided no alarm was first given at other places. The fishery at Cambletown is an object worthy attention, and in some of the ports of Ireland ships may perhaps be

found worth from 150,000 to 200,000 L. Sterling. each.

It might perhaps be equally expedient to alarm Britain on the east side, which might be effected with equal and perhaps inferior force, by destroying the coal shipping of Newcastle &c, which would occasion the utmost distress for fuel in London; and there are many towns of consequence on the East and North coasts of England and Scotland which are defenceless, and might be either burnt or laid under contribution.

The success of either these or the like enterprises will depend on surprising well, and on despatch both in the attack and in the retreat; therefore it is necessary the ships should sail fast and that their force should be sufficient to repel any of the enemy's cruising frigates, two of which may perhaps be met at a time.

It is scarcely conceivable how great a panic the success in any one of these projects would occasion in England. It would convince them that their coasts are vulnerable, and would consequently hurt their public credit.

If alarming the coast of Britain should be thought inexpedient to intercept the enemy's West India or Baltic fleets, or their Hudson Bay ships, or to destroy their Greenland fishery are capital objects, which promise success if well adopted, and any one of them might be finished before the first can take place.

These suggestions were received with favor by Sartine, who had conceived a high idea of Jones's abilities from his conduct of the *Ranger* cruise, and who was entirely willing that French ships under an American flag should conduct attacks upon the coast of their ancient enemy in a manner not ordinarily practised in modern warfare, and that all possible and immediate damage should be worked against England without the

direct or apparent responsibility of his government. M. Baudouine, who was Sartine's personal agent, and M. de Chaumont, who offered to equip the squadron from his personal resources, assured Jones that the three fast-sailing frigates which were called for in his plan would soon be at his disposition, with the tenders and the troops which he had asked for. A company of soldiers from Captain Walsh's Irish regiment was detailed to accompany him, to deliver the land attacks.

The plans which Jones had proposed were so extensive and so bold in character, and his record in the execution of such services had been so brilliant, that the minister was inclined to encourage him in every possible manner. He even hinted that the *Indien* might be spirited away from Holland, in spite of the opposition of the Dutch, and given to Jones as the flag-ship of his future squadron. The Prince of Nassau also expressed the warmest desire to accompany Jones on his daring expedition, and again proposed to join Jones on board the *Indien* as a volunteer. These were flattering prospects indeed, and Jones's hopes rose high. The first plan decided between him and Sartine was such as "to astonish the world," being nothing less than to invade England itself, to invest Liverpool, and to lay the city under contribution. Every detail had been perfected and nothing was wanting, as Jones related, except the King's signature, when rumors of the project became current and the minister thought it prudent to abandon it.

An alternate plan proposed by Jones was now adopted, namely: to intercept the Baltic fleet, and it

was decided to put this project into execution without delay, owing to the private information which Jones had received from England as to the imminent sailing of the fleet and as to its probable route. The King offered him the *Epervier*, then in readiness at L'Orient, and the minister promised to give him two other frigates with two cutters then lying at Saint Malo.

Fully confident that he was now about to be invested with an adequate force, and desirous of fulfilling his office as commander-in-chief with fitting dignity and propriety, Jones now sought to engage a chaplain for his squadron, and described the qualifications he desired in a letter to his banker's son, Henry Grand, written on the eve of his departure from Paris:

I should wish him to be a man of reading and letters, who understands, speaks and writes the French and English, with elegance and propriety. For political reasons it would be well if he were a clergyman of the Protestant profession, whose sanctity of manners and happy natural principles would diffuse unanimity and cheerfulness throughout the ship, and if to these essentials were added the talent of writing fast, and in fair characters, such a man would necessarily be worthy of the highest confidence, and might therefore assure himself of a place at my table, the regulations of which should be entirely under his direction.

A few days subsequent to this he wrote the first of his letters to General Washington, indicating by this act his realization that as commander of an important squadron, awarded him by the allied power of France, he was at last in a position where he might communi-

cate in terms of compliment with the head of the American forces:

PASSY, near Paris, *August 6th.*

HONORED SIR:—

As the scene of War by Sea is now changing from America to Europe, I have been induced to give up the command of the American ship of war *Ranger* and to continue for some time in Europe in compliance with the request of the Minister of the French Marine, in a letter to our Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Versailles.

I will not intrude upon your Excellencies' time even by attempting to pay you the respect which you so justly command. The intention of this letter is only to beg your acceptance of two Epaulettes with which it is accompanied, and which my friend Mr. Williams of Nantes has undertaken to forward—I expected to have had the honor of delivering this little present into your own hands, but not having that satisfaction if in the meantime I can render you any acceptable services in France I hope you will command me without reserve, being with sentiments of perfect Esteem

Honor'd Sir

Yours &c.

His Excellency

Gen. Washington

Commander in chief of the American Army, at his Headquarters.

Jones's agreeable sojourn in Paris was now about to close. He had been honored by the French Government; he had successfully arranged for the sale of his prizes; he had settled, as he supposed, his difficulties with Simpson and his crew. During the two months

of his stay at Passy, he was first a daily visitor and afterward an honored guest in the house of the commissioners, where the beloved Franklin and his associates lived in friendly and familiar intercourse with the family of their generous host, M. de Chaumont.

The château, then called the Hôtel de Chaumont, was of noble construction, castellated, vine-embowered, and commanded a wide view of Paris and its surrounding villages. From a great distance the six towers could be seen upon their hill as one approached by a winding road leading under a stone bridge, and thence through a gate into the walled enclosure. Here Paul Jones and Jonathan Williams, Franklin and Doctor Bancroft, John Adams, Le Ray de Chaumont, his wife and daughter, and her two young brothers, must often have met during those summer days in the garden which spread between the "petit hôtel" of the commissioners and the "grand hôtel" of their host, and these periods of youthful ardor, of rising glory, of intimate association with the friends of the new republic, must always have remained in the memory of Paul Jones as one of almost unalloyed delight and satisfaction. A gallant figure himself, with his honors fresh upon him, he was treated with distinction by the statesmen and soldiers who gathered about Franklin in his retreat at Passy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Fanning, who was afterward distinguished for his intrepid and most successful conduct of the battle from "the tops" in the *Bon Homme Richard* engagement, has left an agreeable account of his reception by Franklin, at Passy, and a description of the mansion of the commissioners.

"It was on the 26th day of July, 1783, at night, when I arrived at the city of Paris, and the next day I visited and paid my respects to Dr. Franklin who then resided at a small village situated upon an eminence between Paris and Versailles, which commands a prospect delight-



Franklin took pleasure in making him known to his powerful friends, and took him to the hotel of the good Duc de la Rochefoucauld and recommended him to the favor of the philanthropist and philosopher who then dignified that historic name. M. de Chaumont and his family were exceedingly attentive to the young American officer, and received him on terms of the greatest intimacy, and Madame de Chaumont and her young daughter conceived the warmest admiration for him. Already known and cordially received by the Duc de Chartres upon the flag-ship of the French fleet at Brest, Jones had been given letters by that attractive and ill-starred prince of the Orleans family, which had procured him an introduction to the Duchesse de Chartres and a favorable reception at the Palais Royal and

fully pleasing to the eye. This pleasant village is called Passy. Three miles distant from Paris, and about six from Versailles. The building in which the Doctor resides with his secretaries, is a noble piece of modern architecture, large and commodious, and adjoining which is a beautiful garden. From this village may be seen nearly the whole of the city of Paris, and its suburbs, and nearly three hundred walled towns, besides a great number of noblemens' villas, which have the appearance of so many palaces and country seats scattered over the country as far as you can extend the eye. Dr. Franklin received me without any ceremony, but with the kindness of a parent, and in this way he conducted himself toward all Americans, whom he was in the habit of calling his children. I found in company with him the Marquis de Lafayette and several other gentlemen, and as soon as they were gone (which was in about a half an hour after my arrival) the Doctor asked me to follow him into his study, and after being seated, he held a long conversation with me upon different subjects, and when I was about leaving him, he invited me to call and see him often and gave me good advice relative to the conduct which I ought to observe while I resided at Paris, and in the same familiar style as though he had been my father, and for which I shall always revere him as long as I live. At this time Dr. Franklin was highly esteemed not only by the French, but by all the foreign ministers resident at the court of France, and his levee, for numbers and respectability, every day exceeded that of the Count de Vergennes, the King's favorite, and the American peoples' friend."

at Versailles. The extreme grace and amiability of the Duchesse de Chartres, who was a daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre, and a princess of the royal house, never failed to impress the most distant of her acquaintances. By her beauty and elegance and her exalted rank she was the very "glass of fashion, and the mould of form," but she was far more remarkable for the ideal distinction of her character and the purity and gentleness of her mind. At the time when Paul Jones was received at the Palais Royal the well-known adoration of the duchess for her husband was still undimmed by either his infidelities or his crimes. The afterward notorious Philippe Egalité was still in the eyes of his brilliant world a gallant prince and trusted servant of France. He was at this moment in command of a portion of the great French fleet of D'Orvilliers, then assembled at Brest and about to engage England on the sea and dispute her ancient sovereignty. As the bearer of letters to the duchess from her husband, Paul Jones could not fail of a condescending and amiable reception. The duchess honored him and his friend Williams with marked attention whenever the two young Americans attended her levees, and intrusted Jones with letters in reply to the duke when he finally departed for Brest. All royalist sentiment was silenced in the chorus of enthusiasm for the new republican ideas. The king's hesitations were overcome, and Marie Antoinette, in a hopeless minority, saw the policy of the cabinet prevail over her protests.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the diary of Mercy Argenteau: "The silent unready Louis did not easily discuss anything, Maurepas was therefore able to continue his policy of fostering republican sentiments, without any

A soldier of liberty himself, Paul Jones was exquisitely flattered by the attentions of these liberty-loving aristocrats of France, whose enthusiasms were so consonant with his own. The gardener's son can scarcely be censured for his delight in that unequalled society of the eighteenth century, brought to the last point of its perfection and still happily unconscious of its approaching fall.

It is significant to observe that, in the midst of the pleasures and honors which he received, Jones's last act before departing from Paris was to leave a formal written request with the commissioners to fulfil their promise of recommending the officers and crew of the *Ranger* to the favor of Congress. This done, he started for the sea-coast on the 7th, and after visiting L'Orient to view the frigate *Epervier*, which Sartine had promised him as the flag-ship of his future squadron, he reached Brest on the 10th of August, but was met on the moment of his arrival with the most disappointing intelligence. His good old friend Count d'Orvilliers, who ran to embrace him in his garden, when Jones, as was his custom, sought him out upon his return, informed him that he himself had given the *Epervier* away to one of his own captains who had lately lost his ship. Count d'Orvilliers informed him, also, with reluctance, that orders had been issued by the minister immediately after Jones's departure from Paris for the

question as to the ultimate end, from the sharp witted Imperialist Marie Antoinette. Lafayette was in Paris, and Paul Jones the buccaneer, and great swelling plans of an expedition against England were fermenting. Paul Jones the Scottish corsair was born at Selkirk in 1736 and his name spread terror in all the seaports of Great Britain and Ireland."

frigates at Saint Malo to sail at once on the errand of intercepting the Baltic fleet.

An unwise decision this afterward proved, for the French commanders, less accurately informed than Jones as to the probable route of the English ships, failed to overtake them, and thus the favorite plan of the commissioners failed of success. Jones now found himself actually without a ship: the *Ranger* had been given away to his disobedient first lieutenant, the promised squadron of Sartine had slipped away before he had even had a sight of it, and he was forced again to bear the heaviest disappointment at the very moment when his fond dream of an important command seemed about to be realized.

From this time on until the spring of the following year Jones was subjected to repeated postponement of his hopes and condemned to the torture of inactivity. The determining reasons for this, as in the case of the surprising refusal of his bill by the commissioners, were not primarily personal, but were the result of the course of more important affairs pertaining to the war which had now openly broken out between France and England.

The brilliant action of the *Belle Poule* with the English *Arethusa*, in which the French ship had come off triumphant, had aroused the greatest enthusiasm in France and raised the hopes of the nation in the rehabilitated navy. The English court, tardily awakening to the world-wide results which their oppression of the American colonies was bringing upon them in an almost universal European war, sought to ignore this

engagement and to excuse the depredations made by their ships upon the commerce of France by various temporizing pretences. The French court, however, considered the withdrawal of the English ambassador from Paris and the message of George III to his Parliament resenting the insult of the treaty of alliance between France and America to have definitely announced the belligerent attitude of England, and proceeded with all speed to prepare for war.

The almost complete destruction of the French naval forces in the Seven Years' War had resulted in a determined demand from the entire French nation for the restoration of the navy. Under Choiseul's direction this policy had been begun and most generously subsidized by public and private contributions. A prodigious activity sprang up in the lately silent ports, and everywhere ships were building and repairing. Under Sartine, who had been promoted to the post of minister of marine as a result of his brilliant success in reforming the police regulations of Paris, the construction of new battle-ships was actively pursued, and when the war was finally begun, at the battle off Ushant, on July the 29th, 1778, the French force under D'Orvilliers had thirty ships of the line to meet an equal number under Keppel. This conflict, ill-managed on both sides, was barren of results. No ships were taken or destroyed, and both fleets, after a bloodless engagement, returned intact to their respective ports. The signals of Admiral Keppel, who commanded the English fleet, being disregarded by Palliser, the plan of the battle failed of execution, and Palliser later

brought capital charges against his superior officer. Amid a storm of excitement and fury over the indecisive engagement, the court-martial over Keppel was held, with the result that he was triumphantly acquitted and restored to an almost unexampled popularity, while Palliser, by a narrow vote, escaped with his life at a similar trial, but not without the execration of the public. The Duc de Chartres, who had also disregarded the signals of his commanding officer, and thus brought about the failure of Count d'Orvilliers's plan of the engagement, was bitterly criticised throughout the kingdom, and his name became a byword for incapacity. This singular engagement, celebrated for its futility, had just taken place, before Jones arrived at Brest, and he found his friend the Duc de Chartres in considerable distress of mind, and D'Orvilliers again ready to sail and eager to retrieve the ill-success of the first encounter with England.

D'Orvilliers realized that it would be exceedingly difficult, now that war had actually begun, for Sartine to divert any considerable force from the French officers who were now clamoring for ships. He therefore invited Jones with much cordiality to accompany him on his next cruise on the *Bretagne*, his flag-ship, and a request was forthwith despatched to Sartine for the requisite permission. An unaccountable delay and misapprehension occurred in this negotiation. The minister sent the permission with Franklin's concurrence, but it failed to arrive in time, and D'Orvilliers sailed away without Jones, who was much chagrined at this second disappointment. His natural irritation

at this enforced inaction was further increased by reports emanating from the ungrateful Simpson to the effect that Jones had been deprived of the command of the *Ranger* by order of the commissioners. In this situation he immediately took steps to convene a court-martial for the purpose of bringing Simpson to trial, and appealed for support and redress to the commissioners. "I have been five days in this place," he wrote on August the 15th, "since my return from Passy, during which time I have neither seen nor heard of Lieutenant Simpson; but Mr. Hill, who was last winter at Passy, and who sailed with us from Nantes, informed me truly that it is generally reported in the *Ranger* and of course throughout the French fleet, and on shore, that I am turned out of the service; that you gentlemen have given Mr. Simpson my place with a Captain's commission, and that my letter to you was involuntary on my part, and in obedience only to your order, to avert dreadful consequences to myself. That these reports prevail is not an idle grounded conjecture, but a melancholy fact, therefore I beseech you, I conjure you, I demand of you to afford me redress by a court martial, to form which we have, with the assistance of Captain Hinman, a sufficient number of officers in France, exclusive of myself. The *Providence* and *Boston* are expected here very soon, and I am certain that they neither can nor will depart again before my friend Captain Hinman can come down here, and it is his unquestioned right to succeed me in the command of the *Ranger*."

The commissioners replied to this appeal by return

post, authorizing Jones to call a court-martial in case sufficient officers could be procured, but directed that no change should be contemplated in the command of the *Ranger*. Jones soon discovered that he was mistaken in believing that a requisite number of officers could be found to form the court. On the 18th he wrote a peremptory command to Captain Whipple of the *Providence*, who was then in the port of Brest, to immediately summon the court-martial on board his ship; but Whipple replied, after due consideration, that, as Captain Hinman refused to serve since he was expected to face a court-martial himself on his return to America, it was impossible to convene the court. He also advanced other reasons for his disapprobation of the court-martial, saying that, as Jones had actually given up Simpson's parole, he believed that Simpson was no longer subject to a trial, and that he, Whipple, had been informed that the commissioners held the same opinion. Jones, with natural irritation, took occasion to remind Whipple of his testimony in his favor when Whipple was tried for cowardice in the affair of the *Glasgow*. Whipple then hastened to remove himself and the ship under his command to Cammeret, and thence to sea.

Jones now penned an exceedingly elaborate account of his troubles with Simpson, from the beginning of his service on the *Ranger*, and sent it off to the commissioners. He recounted his many acts of conciliation, his patience and forbearance with this hopelessly recalcitrant and inefficient officer, and then he abandoned all further thought of redress, and dismissed the matter



from his mind. At a later date the commissioners wrote a formal letter to Jones, clearing him from Simpson's insinuations and false representations.

PASSY, *February* 10, 1779.

SIR:—

As your separation from the *Ranger* and the appointment of Lieutenant Simpson to the command of her will be liable to misinterpretations by persons who are unacquainted with the real cause of those facts, we hereby certify that your leaving the *Ranger* was by our consent, at the express request of his Excellency Monsieur de Sartine, who informed us that he had occasion to employ you in some public service; that Lieutenant Simpson was appointed to the command of the *Ranger* with your consent, after having consented to release him from an arrest under which you had put him.

That your leaving the *Ranger*, in our opinion, ought not, and cannot be an injury to your rank or character in the service of the United States; and that your commission in their navy continues in full force.

We have the honor to be, etc.

B. FRANKLIN  
JOHN ADAMS.

A few days after Whipple's departure the *Ranger* also sailed away, her crew refusing, as usual, to obey orders, and casting Jones's effects ashore to lie broken in the dust, as a last compliment to their captain who had led them to victory and recommended them to the favor of Congress.

An indignant letter from Jonathan Williams, written a few days after Simpson's departure, expressed great regret that he should have influenced Jones to give up

Simpson's parole, as well as his chagrin that Simpson had gotten away before he, Williams, could have had the opportunity of facing him with his own letter acknowledging his gratitude to Jones for his favorable recommendations to the commissioners. Simpson had openly denied having made use of any such expression to Williams. The duplicity of character thus indicated amply justified Jones's ill-opinion of his insubordinate and ungrateful officer, and further evidence of the justness of this opinion was afterward supplied by Simpson's later record. He was relieved from his command soon after his return to America, and never afterward employed in the United States navy. The venial-minded crew of the *Ranger* also fully justified the opinion their too enterprising captain had formed of them, for without exception they all abandoned the service of the government and adopted the more lucrative occupation of privateering immediately upon their return to Portsmouth.

A cooler-headed and less ardently ambitious officer than Paul Jones might easily have yielded to irritation if hampered with such rank insubordination and small-mindedness, and insubordination was not the only difficulty with which he was forced to deal. The ignorance, carelessness, and malicious jealousy of other American officers in Europe likewise tormented him. Captain Whipple permitted the escape of several of Jones's prisoners and released others on parole without his knowledge, and to his horror and dismay Jones learned by a chance meeting with a French officer that the guard of French soldiers which D'Orvilliers had

generously placed over them had been removed, and that they might all escape at any moment. He wrote in frantic haste to the commissioners, but wisely refrained from waiting for their reply, and secured another guard from the French intendant of the marine at Brest. The *Ranger's* prize, the *Lord Chatham*, was sold without his knowledge, and the *Drake* plundered with impunity. He commented with his usual force upon these outrages in letters to his friends, but was not distracted from the one burning preoccupation of his days and sleepless nights, which was to force the French minister to fulfil his promise to give him another command.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WAITING FOR A COMMAND

IN the voluminous correspondence which belongs to the five months which followed Paul Jones's departure from Paris his biographer is furnished with an almost daily record of his days and a clear and intimate picture of his mind and character. That inflexible determination to succeed in spite of every obstacle which had won him every advancement in his career is here most vividly disclosed.

The letters which he sent out to every important individual of his acquaintance grew from dignified remonstrance into agonized appeals for release from his intolerable situation. Inaction was literally destructive to him, and the prolonged torture had a most acute effect upon his health. Once more he was called upon to experience the plunge from high hopes to unmerited misfortune which was so singular a part of his remarkable life. The bearer of the new flag of freedom, the valorous captor of the *Drake*, who in former times had found Brest a port of pleasure, where he had dined familiarly with titled officers of rank and had been the universal object of praise, now found himself alone, except for Lieutenant Amiel, who, as he expressed it, "had exercised patience with him for four months in this detested spot, without society or hospitality." Keenly conscious of his inability to dispel the prevalent impression that he had offended the

commissioners and was an officer in disgrace, he was reluctant to walk abroad. Under these circumstances he became, as was his custom during his periods of inactivity, reserved and silent, "taciturn," as the unlucky companion of his misfortunes complained in letters to his wife. So the Chase narrative describes him when tortured by his longing for action, and so André, his last companion and secretary, related that he had again become during the closing days of his life.

On taking leave of Franklin in Paris he had received permission to write to him frequently, and the promise of prompt replies; but, fearing to be troublesome to his venerable friend, he wrote long letters to Doctor Bancroft, relying on him to present his case to Franklin and to M. de Chaumont. On the 24th of August he wrote to Bancroft, saying that a French frigate, the *Renommée*, was still without a commander, and begging him to ask M. de Chaumont to procure it from Sartine. On the same day he wrote briefly to Franklin, urging that at "this nice moment he should either be in search of marine knowledge, or of honor in some private enterprise." In this very restrained and respectful letter he enclosed another which he had prepared for the Prince of Nassau, with whom he had expected to be associated in the cruise with his vanished squadron, for his inspection and approval:

BREST, *August 24, 1778.*

MY PRINCE:—

The Honor which you propose to do me by accompanying me on the Ocean fills my heart with the warmest Sentiments of Gratitude.

When your intentions were communicated to me I had under my Command a Ship bound in company with two fine Frigates for America where there is now two new Ships of 80 Guns each and 8 Frigates of 40 Guns each nearly ready for Sea.

On my arrival there from the former confidence of Congress I had assurance of an immediate removal into one of their best ships and to have been Appointed to Command the first Squadron which they thought fit to destine for any private Expedition—Before I came to Europe I had been honored with several such Appointments—and I had Assurance that when America saw fit to appoint Admirals, my name should be Numerated.—

These my Prince were flattering prospects to a man who drew his sword only from Principles of Philanthropy, in Support of the Dignity of Human Nature.—And these are the prospects which I have Voluntarily laid aside that I may pursue Glory in your Company.

Suffer me not therefore I beseech you to continue longer in this shameful inactivity—such dishonor is worse to me than a thousand deaths.—I have already lost that Golden Season the Summer which in War is of more value than all the Rest of the Year—I appear here as a Person cast off and useless and when any person asks me what I purpose to do, I am unable to Answer.

Had this been my first or second disappointment I should have said nothing concerning it—but after various other objects had miscarried before I left Passy, which M. de Sartine had thought of to keep me employed until the scheme wherein you were concerned could take place—I was ordered down here at so short a notice that I had not time before my departure to take leave of you; yet on my arrival here I found that what had been proposed for me was be-

stowed on others.—I then offered to follow Count D'Orvilliers as a Volunteer agreeable to his kind invitation—but Mons. De la Prevalaye will not even permit me to do this, it not being mentioned in his Orders.—

I have my Prince been unaccustomed to ask any favors even from Congress—for I am not in pursuit of Interest—Yet let me beseech you to represent my Situation to the best of Kings—that I may with you be forthwith enabled to pursue Glory and to humble the Common Enemies of Humanity.

If the Ship that was at first proposed cannot with certainty be got to Sea next month you, my Prince, can obtain another with the *Epervier* and *Alert* tenders—There is a fine Frigate at L'Orient built on the same construction with the Ship at first proposed and mounted with eighteen pounders—this Ship has been at India, is known to sail fast and might perhaps be obtained 'till it is seen whether the other can be got out.—

If this Ship is refused there are many other fine Frigates newly built at St. Malo's and other places to which I hear of no Commanders being appointed—I have the greatest dependence on the generous intentions of that great Minister Monseig'r de Sartine, but I cannot every day intrude on him with letters and in the Multiplicity and importance of his Affairs—my Concerns may escape his Memory.—

I wish for the honor of a letter from your hand—tho' I cannot write to you in French yet I understand letters that are written on that Language—and I have now with me a Lieutenant who speaks it well.—

I am with Sentiments of real Esteem and Respect  
My Prince,  
Yours &c.

His Highness  
The Prince de Nassau

A week later, without news from any quarter, he wrote again to the prince and to Bancroft, saying that he was "to the last degree unhappy." The Prince of Nassau never replied to Jones's appeal, but after a few days a friendly letter arrived from Franklin, explaining that Bancroft's silence was due to illness, and exhorting him to have patience. By the 11th of September he had become very impatient and wrote to his friend Williams a free expression of his feelings, saying that if the next post brought him nothing definite he would tell the dilatory minister "a round unvarnished tale." This with his characteristic directness he proceeded to do in the following explicit presentation of his situation:

BREST, 13th September 1778.

HONORED SIR:—

When his Excellency Doctor Franklin first informed me that You had condescended to think me worthy of your Notice, I took such pleasure in reflecting on the happy Alliance between France and America that I was really flattered, and entertained the most Grateful sense of the Honor which you proposed for me, as well as of the favor which the King proposed for America; by putting so fine a Ship of War as the *Indien* under my command and under its Flag with unlimited Orders.—

In obedience to your desire I came to Versailles, and was taught to believe that my intended Ship was in Deep Water and ready for the Sea.—But when the Prince returned, I received from him a different account; I was told that the *Indien* could not be got afloat within a shorter period than three months, at the first approaching Equinox.—

To employ this interval usefully, I first offered to go



from Brest with Count D'Orvilliers as a volunteer—which you thought fit to reject—I had then the satisfaction to find that You approved in general of a variety of hints for private enterprises which I had drawn up for your Consideration; and I was flattered with assurances from Messrs. de Chaumont and Baudouine that three of the finest Frigates in France with two Tenders and a number of Troops should be immediately put under my Command, and that I should have unlimited Orders and be at the liberty to pursue such of my own projects as I thought proper.—But this plan fell to nothing in the moment when I was taught to think that nothing was wanting but the King's signature.—

Another much inferior Armament from L'Orient was proposed to be put under my command, which was by no means equal to the Services that were expected from it; for Speed and Force, though both requisite, were both wanting;—Happily for me this also failed—and I was thereby saved from a dreadful prospect of Ruin and Dishonor.

I had so entire a reliance that You would desire nothing of me inconsistent with my honor and rank, that the moment you required me to come down here in Order to proceed round to St. Malo;—tho' I had received no written orders, and neither know Your intention respecting my destination or Command; I obeyed with such haste that altho' my curiosity led me to look at the Armament at L'orient; Yet I was but three days from Passy 'till I reached Brest.—Here too I drew a blank.—

But when I saw the *Lively* it was no disappointment; as that Ship both in sailing and equipment is far inferior to the *Ranger*.—

My only disappointment here was my being precluded from Embarking in pursuit of Marine Knowl-

edge with Count D'Orvilliers; who did not sail till seven days after my return.—He is my friend, and often expressed his wish for my Company.—I accompanied him out of the Road when the Fleet sailed; and he always lamented that neither himself nor any person in Authority in Brest had received from you any Order that mentioned my Name;—I am astonished therefore to be informed that you attributed my not being in the Fleet to my stay at L'Orient.

I am not a mere adventurer of fortune.—Stimulated by Principles of Reason and Philanthropy, I laid aside my enjoyments in private life, and embarked under the Flag of America when it was first displayed.—In that line my desire of Fame is Infinite; and I must not now so far forget my Honor and what I owe to my friends and America as to remain inactive.

My Rank knows no superior in the American Marine; I have long since been appointed to Command an expedition with five of its Ships; and I can receive orders from no Junior or Inferior Officer whatever.

I have been here in the most tormenting Suspense for more than a month since my return—and agreeable to your desire as mentioned to me by Monsieur de Chaumont a Lieutenant has been appointed and is with me, who speaks the French as well as the English.

Circular letters have been written and sent the 8th of last month from the English Admiralty—because they expected me to pay another visit with four Ships—Therefore I trust that if the *Indien* is not to be got out, you will not at the approaching Season substitute a Force that is not at least equal both in Strength and Sailing to any of the Enemies Cruising Ships.

I do not wish to interfere with the Harmony of the French Marine, but if I am still thought worthy of your Attention, I shall hope for a separate Command

with liberal Orders.—If on the Contrary You should have no further occasion for my Services; the only favor I can ask is that You will give me the *Alert* with a few Seamen, and permit me to return and carry with me your good opinion in that small vessel before the Winter to America.—

I am happy to hear that the Frigates from St. Malo have been successful near Shetland.—Had Count D'Estaing arrived in the Delaware a few days sooner, he must have made a most Glorious and easy Conquest. Many other successful projects may be adopted from the Hints which I had the honor to draw up; and if I can still furnish, or execute any of those already furnished so as to distress and humble the Common Enemy it will afford me the truest Satisfaction.

I am ambitious to merit the Honor of your Friendship and favor; and being fully persuaded that I now address a noble-minded man who will not be offended with the Honest Freedom which has always marked my Correspondence—I am with great Esteem and profound Respect,

Honored Sir,  
Yours &c.

Monseigneur De Sartine.

This letter he also submitted to Franklin, promising still to have patience and to do nothing without his knowledge and advice. To M. de Chaumont he declared in a letter of the 16th that he “would not wish his worst enemy to be in his situation.” The French fleet now returned to Brest, bringing in the *Fox*, an English frigate of twenty-four guns, once the prize of the American ships *Hancock* and *Boston*. Although a far more modest command than the squadron which

had previously been promised him, Jones knew that the *Fox* was a fast sailer and immediately asked Franklin to procure her for him, with the *Alert* as tender, and a day or two afterward wrote also to the Duc de Chartres, who had returned to Paris, begging him to use his influence in his behalf.

A letter from Doctor Bancroft, who had persuaded M. de Chaumont to interview Sartine in regard to Jones's affairs, announced that the minister had promised to give him the *Fox*, but this welcome news was soon contradicted by the intelligence that the minister had broken his promise to Jones, and had given the frigate away to a French lieutenant. Conscious of the wrong he had inflicted upon Jones in giving preference to the French officer, M. de Sartine now became very desirous of getting rid of him, and wrote to D'Orvilliers that it was his intention to send the importunate American officer home in a "bonne voiture"—an easy coach. Justly indignant, Jones now took occasion to express his opinion of the minister in a quarter where it might prove effective. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld, during a recent stay at Brest, had given a sympathetic hearing to Jones's complaints, and to him he now directed a letter which has been criticised as indiscreet, but which expresses very forcibly his just contempt for M. de Sartine's methods. Paul Jones never stooped to employ any of the arts of the courtier to king or minister, but boldly demanded his rights with a freedom and democratic independence worthy of the cause which he had so ardently adopted:

BREST 9th Octo. 1778.

HONORED SIR:

The 21st Ult. I wrote a particular Account of my situation here to his Royal Highness the Duc de Chartres.—But that brave prince has himself I understand met with unmerited trouble and of course has not yet had leisure to remove my suspense.—

The Minister's behavior towards me has been and is really Astonishing.—

At his request (for I sought not the Connection) I gave up absolute Certainties and far more flattering prospects than any of those which he proposed.—What inducement could I have for this but Gratitude to France for having first recognized our Independence?—

And having given my word to stay for some time in Europe, I have been, and am unwilling to take it back—Especially after having Communicated the Circumstances to Congress.—

The Minister to my infinite mortification—after possessing himself of my schemes and ideas has treated me like a Child five times successively, by leading me on from great to little and from little to less.—Does such conduct do Honor either to his Head or to his Heart?—

He has not to this moment offered me the least apology for any of these five deceptions—nor has he, I believe, assigned any good reason to that venerable and great character His Excellency Doctor Franklin whom he has made the instrument to entrap me in this cruel state of Inaction and Suspense.—

The Minister has lately written a letter to Count D'Orvilliers proposing to send me home in "Une bonne voiture."—This is absolutely adding Insult to Injury—and it is the proposition of a Man whose veracity I have not experienced in former cases.—

I could in the summer with the *Ranger* joined by the two other American Frigates have given the Enemy

sufficient foundation for their Fears in Britain as well as in Ireland.—And I could since have been assisting Count D'Estaing or acting separately with an American Squadron. Instead of this I am chained down to a shameful inactivity here after having written to Congress to reserve no Command for me in America.—

Convinced as I am that your Noble and generous breast will feel for my unmerited treatment I must beseech you to interest yourself with the Duc de Chartres—that the King may be made acquainted with my Situation.—

I have been taught to believe that I have been detained in France with his Majesty's knowledge and approbation—and I am sure he is too good a prince to detain me for my hurt or dishonor. M. de Sartine may think as he pleases—but Congress will not thank him for having thus treated an Officer who has always been honored with their Favor and Friendship.—

I entertained some hopes of his honorable intentions 'till he gave the command of the *Fox* to a Lieutenant after my friends had asked for me only that Ship with the *Alert*, Cutter.—He was the asker at the beginning and ought to be so now—He has to my certain knowledge, Ships unbestowed—And he is bound in honor to give me the *Indien* as he proposed at the first,—or an equivalent command immediately.—I should very much esteem the honor of a line from Your hand and shall always be happy in Opportunities to merit your Favor and Friendship—being with profound Esteem and Respect,

Honored Sir

Yours &c.

JOHN PAUL JONES.

Monseig. Le Duc De Rochefoucauld.

“I am not ill pleased,” he wrote to Williams, who had commented not unnaturally upon the courage of

Jones's attitude toward the minister, "that you discover a species of inflexibility in my nature which will not suffer me to kneel at the feet of haughty power, or to stoop where I cannot esteem. I know that this turn of mind is highly unfavorable to any who would obtain court favor, or promotion in Europe, yet I find no inclination to alter my disposition, and tho' in my life I have met with some severe trials, if I cannot rise by even and direct methods, I will not rise at all."

His friends at Passy were scarcely less indignant than Jones himself over the bad faith of the French minister, and Bancroft wrote him on the 10th of October that he had himself gone to the Chevalier Baudouine to make "one more strong and final representation of your business," and that Baudouine had said that Sartine was ashamed, and felt the justice of Jones's complaints, and that he had good intentions, but had been prevented from carrying them out by the intrigues of the French marine officers, who were demanding ships and opposing the assignment of any except to their own number, but that he would soon provide him with a ship, even if he were obliged to purchase it.

Bancroft wrote also that, if nothing were done, Franklin would in a few days declare his utmost resentment, but advised Jones to have patience a little while longer. Franklin's grandson and secretary, William Temple Franklin, wrote also very sympathetically of the indignation of his friends at the treatment he had received. "Ce brave capitaine Jones, que fait il?" was the question which he declared that he heard daily from many inquirers.

Jones now received a letter from M. de Chaumont, in which his friend informed him that he also had visited Versailles to urge the minister to give him a ship, and that Sartine had sworn "by the Styx" that he would surely give him one; in the meantime he, M. de Chaumont, offered him the command of a privateer owned and fitted out by himself for private enterprises, but to this offer Jones replied with pride that, "as a servant of the Imperial Republic of America, honored with the friendship and favor of Congress he could not on his own authority or inclination serve either himself or even his best friend in any private line whatsoever, unless either the honor or interest of America is the premier object." He declared that he had believed the minister in the beginning, but now, as he had led him on from one fair promise to another, he doubted him, and wished Sartine to know that he had lost all confidence in his engagements. "Tho' he 'swears even by the Styx' I will accept nothing now," he announced, from the height of his just indignation, "which sails slow or is of trifling force, and shall expect a yes, or no, to this immediately."

On the same day, in a cipher letter to his friend Williams, Jones, now at white heat, declared that "by earth, air, and sea, Sartine must make direct satisfaction to his sacred honor, which he has dared to violate, and that he had now determined to appeal from the minister to the King."

The presentation of his situation which Jones now drew up for Louis XVI is not only an admirable example of that terse and lucid English which was at his com-



mand, but an instance, possibly the most notable, of the courage and superb self-confidence which were the principal elements of his greatness. His request to the Duchesse de Chartres to present his letter in person to the King partook of the same courage, not to say aplomb, with which he had directed his appeal over the head of the minister to the King himself. The brief letter to the duchess as well as that to the King have been published in French by a recent biographer of Jones,<sup>1</sup> with the statement that the duchess obeyed his behest and that, in consequence of her personal interview with the King, the *Bon Homme Richard* was placed finally at Jones's disposition.

The letters were not written in French, for, according to repeated statements in his letters to the Prince of Nassau and the Duc de Chartres, he was unable at this time to write the language, nor in all probability were they ever seen by either the duchess or the King; for before they arrived in Paris, sent first, according to Jones's invariable custom, to Doctor Franklin, M. de Sartine had himself sent a formal promise to the commissioners to give Jones a ship. It was therefore Franklin's opinion that there was no longer any necessity for Jones to send them, and that an expression of lack of confidence in the minister in the face of his written promise to carry out his engagement with Jones would be unwise. Jones acquiesced in this decision, although with some reluctance, and the letters never left the hands of Franklin. They are, however, too expressive of his feelings at this crisis to be omitted:

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Buell.

BREST, *Oct.* 1778.

MADAME:—

The business which brought me from Brest to Paris last Summer, when I had the honor and happiness of paying my respects to your Royal Highness afforded me a very fair prospect of being able immediately to pay a much more successful visit to the enemies' coast than that from which I was then returned.—

I appeared at Versailles by the particular desire of M. de Sartine—who in consequence of the high Opinion which he professed to have of my Conduct and Bravery voluntarily proposed (as I understood with the consent and approbation of his Majesty) to bestow on me a very Honorable Command; he having written a letter to their "Excellencies the American Plenipotentiaries" requesting as a favor that I might be permitted to remain in Europe.

I had the honor to furnish the Minister with a number of plans which he approved for Secret Expeditions, but tho' various Armaments have been proposed to be put under my command to pursue my own projects—Yet every one of these Armaments have fallen to nothing—some of them even in the Moment when I was taught to believe that the King's signature alone was wanting.—

Thus have I been trifled with for nearly five months. The best season of the year and such opportunities of serving my Country and acquiring Honor as I cannot again expect in the course of this War are lost.—

I have written to the Congress to reserve no Command for me in America—And to my inexpressible mortification having no Command here, I am considered everywhere as an Officer in Disgrace.—

Yet the Minister has made no apology for all this either to myself who did not seek after the connection or to his Excellency Doctor Franklin.—

I am not an Adventurer in search of Fortune, on the contrary I laid aside my enjoyments in Private Life and drew my Sword at the Commencement of this War only in support of the Dignity and Violated Rights of Human Nature.—

Honored as I am with the favor and friendship of the Congress both my Honor and my Duty prompt me to steadfastly persevere; 'till I see those Rights Established,—or lose my life in the Righteous pursuit.—

But as I see no prospect of being soon relieved from this Unworthy Situation I have written the within letter to his Majesty which I must beseech your Royal Highness to present—you will thereby add a Singular Objection to what I already owe to your former Condescending Attention.—

I should be supremely happy to succeed thro' the influence of so Amiable a Princess and so powerful an Advocate—whom I perfectly esteem and respect.—

Being truly and always in the Artless sincerity of my Heart,

Madam Your Royal Highness,  
Very Obliged &c.

Madame la Duchesse de Chartres.

BREST, *October 19th*, 1778.

SIRE:

After my return to Brest in the American Ship of War the *Ranger*, from the Irish Channel,—His Excellency Doctor Franklin, did me the Honor to inform me by a letter dated the 1st of June—That M. de Sartine having an High Opinion of my Conduct and Bravery, had determined with your Majesty's consent and approbation to give me the Command of the Ship of War the *Indien*; which was built at Amsterdam but afterwards for political reasons made the property of France.—I was to act with unlimited orders under the Com-

mission and Flag of America, and the Prince de Nassau proposed to accompany me on the Ocean.—

I was deeply penetrated with a sense of the Honor done me by this generous proposition, as well as of the favor which your Majesty intended thereby to confer on America,—And I accepted the offer with the greater pleasure as the Congress had sent me to Europe in the *Ranger* to Command the *Indien*, before the property of that ship was changed.

The Minister desired to see me at Versailles to settle future plans of Operation;—and I attended him for that purpose—I was told that the *Indien* was at the Texel completely Armed and fitted for the Sea.—But the Prince de Nassau was sent express to Holland and returned with a very different account. He reported that the *Indien* was at Amsterdam and could not be got afloat or Armed before the September Equinox.—

The American Plenipotentiaries proposed that I should return to America, and as I have been appointed oftener than once to the Chief Command of an American Squadron to execute Secret Enterprizes, it was not doubted but that Congress would again show me preference.—

M. de Sartine however thought proper to prevent my Departure by writing a letter without my knowledge to the American Plenipotentiaries, requesting as a favor that I might be permitted to remain in Europe, and that the *Ranger* might be sent back to America under another Commander;—He having special service which he wished me to execute.

This request they readily granted—And I was flattered by the prospect of being enabled to testify by my services, my gratitude to Your Majesty, as the first Prince who has so generously acknowledged our Independence.—

There was an interval of more than three months

before the *Indien* was expected to be afloat.—To employ that period usefully, when your Majesty's Fleet was first Ordered to sail from Brest;—I proposed to the Minister to embark in it as a Volunteer in pursuit of Marine knowledge.—The Minister thought fit to reject that offer—but I had at the same time the Satisfaction to find that he entirely approved of a variety of Hints for private Enterprizes which I had drawn up for his consideration.—

Two gentlemen were appointed to settle with me the plans that were to be adopted—who gave me assurance that three of the best Frigates in France with two tenders and a number of troops should be immediately put under my Command, to pursue such of my own projects as I tho't proper,—but this fell to nothing in the Moment when I was taught to believe that your Majesty's signature alone was wanting.—

Another Armament composed of Cutters and small vessels at L'Orient was proposed to be put under my Command to Alarm the Coasts of England and check the Jersey Privateers—But happily for me, this also failed; and I was thereby saved from impending ruin and Dishonor. For as I now find each of the vessels sail slow, and their United Force is very insignificant.—

The Minister then thought fit that I should return to Brest to Command the *Lively*, and join some Frigates on an Expedition from St. Malo to the North Sea.—

I returned here with express haste for that purpose; but found that the *Lively* had been bestowed at Brest before the Minister mentioned that ship to me at Versailles.—

This was, however, another fortunate disappointment as the *Lively* proves both in sailing and equipment much inferior to the *Ranger*.—

But more especially if it be true, as I have since understood, that it was the Minister's intention to give

the Chief Command of the Expedition to a Lieutenant, which had I been concerned in it would have occasioned a very disagreeable Misunderstanding.—

For as an officer of the first Rank in the American Marine, who has always been honored with the Favor and Friendship of the Congress; I can receive Orders from no Inferior Officer whatsoever.—

My plan was the destruction of the English Baltic Fleet of great consequence to the Enemies Marine, and then only protected by one Frigate, and I would have held myself responsible for its success had I commanded the Expedition.—

M. de Sartine afterwards sent orders to General D'Orvilliers to receive me on board the Fleet agreeable to my former proposal, but the orders did not appear until after the departure of the Fleet the last time from Brest, nor was I made acquainted with the Circumstances before the Fleet returned here.—

Thus have I been chained down to a Shameful Inactivity for the space of near Five Months.—I have lost the best season of the Year; and such opportunities of serving my Country and acquiring Honor as I cannot again expect in the course of this War; and to my infinite Mortification having no command, I am considered everywhere as an Officer cast off and in Disgrace for Secret Reasons.—

I have written respectful letters to the Minister—none of which he has condescended to answer. I have written to the Prince de Nassau with as little effect.—And I do not understand that any Apology has been made even to that great and venerable Character his Excellency Doctor Franklin; whom the Minister has made the instrument of bringing me into such unmerited trouble.—

Having written to the Congress to reserve no Command for me in America, my sensibility is the more

affected by this Unworthy Situation,—in the sight of your Majesties Fleet,—I however make no remark on the treatment which I have received.—

Though I wish not to become my own panegyrist; Yet I must beg your Majesties permission to observe that I am not an Adventurer in search of Fortune, of which I thank God I inherit a Sufficiency.—

When the American Banners were first displayed, I drew my Sword in Support of the Violated Dignity and the Rights of Human Nature,—and both Honor and duty prompt me to steadfastly continue the Righteous pursuit, and to sacrifice to it not only my private enjoyments but even my life if necessary.

I must acknowledge that the generous praise which I have received from Congress and others exceeds the merit of my past services, and therefore I the more ardently wish for future opportunities of testifying my gratitude by my activity.—

As your Majesty by espousing the cause of America hath become “the protector of the Rights of Human Nature” I am persuaded that you will not disregard my Situation nor Suffer me to remain any longer in this insupportable Disgrace.—

I am with perfect Gratitude and profound Respect,  
Sire,

Your Majesties  
Very Obligated  
Very Obedient  
and very humble Servt.—

His Most Christian Majesty—

Louis King of France & Navarre.—

Brought to a realizing sense that Jones was too highly regarded by the representatives of the American Government to be ignominiously sent home, and further

influenced by the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who, with his well-known benevolence, had used the power of his great position with the minister in obedience to Jones's request, the minister assured the duc that he entertained the highest opinion of Jones. Abandoning at once his resentment against the minister, on the intelligence of the latter's appreciation, Jones wrote to M. de Chau-mont that "his best respects and most grateful thanks awaited the minister, for the honorable things he had said of him to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, and that it would be his ambition to merit his favor and affection."

It was well that Jones's sufferings were allayed temporarily by these fair words, for many weeks and even months were to elapse before the promises were redeemed. During the month of November he was in receipt of various communications from the different Continental agents at the various seaports in regard to available ships, and he attempted to beguile the ennui of his suspense by sending accounts of his situation to his friends Morris and Hewes, whose rapturous praises of his conduct of the *Ranger* cruise had been repeated to him by his fellow-officer Captain Bell, who had just arrived at L'Orient, and who had seen Morris at Philadelphia and Hewes at Edenton. Captain Bell reported that various "northward" officers had stated that Simpson had superseded him in the command of the *Ranger*, but that "The Public to the southward think you the finest fellow belonging to America." To this comforting letter Jones replied that his account of the particular affection of Mr. Morris and Mr. Hewes af-



forded him the truest pleasure, that he would rather have the esteem and friendship of a few such men than the empty applause of millions; yet he confessed that his vanity was justly flattered by the account of the generous approbation of his past services. To that generous public he declared: "I pledge myself that it shall be my first care and my heart's supremest wish to merit the continuance of its approbation, by my future services and constant readiness to support the honor of freedom's flag."

To his friend Captain McNeill, who had been unjustly suspended from his command, he wrote with great sympathy, as to one who had also fallen among thieves, and expressed his sincerest thanks for his good opinion, saying modestly that in spite of his troubles he believed "no man ever received so much praise for a little service in Europe as himself."

Six long weeks had now dragged by since Jones had had the minister's definite promise to give him a ship, and at last he received orders from M. de Chaumont directing him to inspect some insignificant sloops at Brest, with a view to their purchase. Jones reported them as utterly unfit for his purpose, saying that "he wished to have no connection with any ships which do not sail fast, as I intend to go in harm's way." He had been fearful that the *Indien* would be given away to some French officer, and thanked M. de Chaumont for his assurance that she was not to be armed before the spring. He wrote that the French officers understood that that ship had been promised him and would make no difficulty about its being given to him. "You

know," he continued, "that I have remained in Europe on the faith of commanding that ship, and have lost so much time that I cannot regain!—I have almost half killed myself with grief," and then he reminded M. de Chaumont that the Congress of the United States had adopted no rule against rewarding the merit of a stranger, and referred to the appointments in the army and to the fact that the best ship in the navy had been called the *Alliance* and given to a French officer.

Wearied out at last with the long-drawn agony of his waiting, Jones now thought of going to L'Orient, being, as he declared, "heartily sick of Brest and an eyesore to the Marine," but before he departed he had occasion to reply to a characteristic inquiry of Arthur Lee's in regard to the sale of one of the prizes taken by the *Ranger* on his voyage across the Atlantic, the one which had been properly conducted and recorded by Jonathan Williams. Mr. Lee had declined to give Jones a copy of the rules and regulations of the American marine, which Jones had desired for use in his approaching cruise, for the reason that he considered that Jones's application had not been made in a respectful form. Disappointed and mortified as he was in his seemingly helpless situation, Jones saw no reason why he should accept insult from Mr. Lee, and sent the following very independent and dignified reply:

BREST, *November 21st, 1778.*

HIS EXCELLENCY, ARTHUR LEE,

*Sir:—*

I have the honor to receive your letter of the 16th current. It is my duty, and will ever afford me

pleasure, to give every satisfactory information in my power respecting any circumstances that regards the public interest, and my conduct as an American officer. In my letter of the 3rd of June to the Commissioners I was particular in accounting for the prizes I had taken. On my way from America to Nantz I took two brigs laden with fruit from Malaga, for London. The one of which you inquire arrived at Nantz and was sold very cheap by Messrs. Morris and Williams, the captors' moiety of which was paid them in February, agreeable to your letter. This is all that came within my knowledge; but I have understood, and believe, that the latter acted in that business by virtue of the authority which he received from the former, to whom I made application on my arrival. Should any farther account be necessary, I am always ready to give it as far as it lays in my power.

If Mr. Lee will for a moment recur to my letter to him, dated on board the *Ranger* the 26th of February last, he will find no reason to charge me with want of due respect. The handbill that was enclosed by which I became accountable to those who entered to serve under my command for the regular payment of their wages, having been approved by the Marine Committee (as certified to me under their Secretary's hand) the public faith was thereby pledged to put it in my power, else I should have found other means to fulfill that engagement. And this appears to have been Mr. Lee's opinion when he wrote with his own hand a letter of credit in my favor, at Passy, the 10th of January last, now before me.

The handful of men under my command had been led through many dangers of storms and enemies, and, though in want of clothing and money, were returned with some credit to Brest, yet when on the 16th of May I ventured to sign my first draft on the public funds for

their relief, agreeable to my letter of advice, my signature was dishonored.

Neither Dr. Franklin nor Mr. Adams were acquainted with my engagement to the crew; but Mr. Lee, who had been better informed, concurred to dishonor my draft, and left me with two hundred prisoners of war, a number of sick and wounded, an almost naked crew, and a ship, after a severe engagement, in want of stores and provisions, from the 9th of May till the 13th of June, destitute of any public support; yet I found means to cure my wounded, feed my people, to refit the ship, and guard my prisoners.

The dishonor that had been done me was known through the French fleet and elsewhere; yet though I was the first that had appeared at Brest and obtained from France the honors due the American flag, I made no public complaints, and only expressed my concern by letter to the Commissioners, at the disgraceful wound which the public credit had suffered through me. And now I beg leave to ask Mr. Lee if I have deserved such treatment?

The wretched situation of the crew occasioned murmuring which was artfully fomented by an officer in disgrace, who succeeded too well in persuading the people that I had deceived them, and that they should cast the whole blame upon me, as the hindrance to their receiving wages, prize-money, and bounties. In this agitation of their minds he obtained from them certificates, &c. to the Commissioners in his favor.

These poor men were at last dragged away without clothing, having only received at Brest eight or nine crowns each, as prize money, the moment of their departure, and not being allowed time to lay out that trifle, and imprecating general curses on the public service, public agents, and all concerned.

This is not the way to establish a Navy. Congress

has made laws for its internal government, and appointed the officers alone as magistrates to put them into execution. The standing order of the Marine Committee has been to preserve strict discipline in the fleet, and all applications of complaint, either against individuals or numbers, they have rejected without answer. It not being, as they have told me, the province of the civil power to interfere in the internal government of ships of war. And you may now see, that listening to the people of the *Ranger*, instead of doing good, has destroyed even the shadow of subordination.

Mr. Amiel has told me that you objected to my receiving copies of some papers that concern me, because you thought I had not made a respectful application. A copy of it is enclosed, which though not in form of humble petition, I believe it will be difficult to construe into disrespect. True respect can never be extorted; and I will say of myself, that

“The tribute of respect to greatness due,  
Not the bribed sycophant more freely pays.”

I shall only add, that the dishonor of my bill of exchange has not only served to corroborate the ungrateful misrepresentations of Lieut. Simpson, but also occasioned the infamous attachment of the *Ranger's* prizes, for the provisions previously furnished by M. Bersolle.

I thank you, sir, for your polite attentions while I was at Paris last Winter, which I received as a proof of your good opinion, and which I have not since forfeited by any misconduct.

The apparent mystery of my present situation cannot be imputed to me as a fault, or if it is, I am responsible to Congress. I have endeavored in my narrow

walk, to pursue a steady line of duty, wishing to offend none.

I have the honor to be,

With due respect, Sir, yours, &c.

Events were to show at a later crisis of his affairs how Lee was prepared to avenge himself for this self-respecting attitude on Jones's part.

Among several reports from his friends in regard to available ships, Jones heard from James Moylan, the United States commercial agent at L'Orient, of an East Indian ship called the *Duras* which was for sale, and finally determined, although without the minister's direct authority, to proceed to that port immediately, to inspect the ship himself. "I am taking a step out of rule," he wrote to Williams, "but I see no remedy unless I wish to be trifled with until I die of grief."

Arrived at L'Orient on the evening of the 6th of December, he wrote to M. de Chaumont, on the next day, that he had seen the *Duras*, and that, although somewhat more than twelve years old, he believed she would answer. To this report of Jones no reply of any kind arrived for two weeks, and the owner, who had received other offers for the ship, gave Jones ten days' refusal in which to purchase her. Under this certainly unnecessary delay he wrote a most pitiful account of his situation to his friend Williams: "My patience being worn out at Brest, Mr. Amiel and myself left that purgatory and have been here since the 6th. I wrote on the 7th to M. de Chaumont that there is now a ship that might answer, but no reply has yet appeared. I have not yet received a line from M. de

Chaumont since the 9th ult., he at that time offered to buy me one of the small sloops at Brest; to that I sent an absolute refusal. His silence has hurt me exceedingly, but this silence of Franklin has hurt me still more, as I regard him with the affection of a son to a parent. So much indeed have I suffered through the severity of my situation, that I find my health much impaired. I cannot sleep, and I can say from my own sad experience,

““ Were I to curse the man I hate,  
Attendance and dependence be his fate.””

Two days after writing this letter, he sent a last agonized appeal to M. de Chaumont, telling him that the *Duras* would certainly be sold if he did not promptly send his decision, and imploring him to put him out of his misery by sending him some definite reply. “If you really love me,” he wrote, “you will remove my doubts, or tell me that my fears are true, else I shall believe that I have been betrayed and sacrificed with premeditation.”

The very definiteness of the term at which the refusal of the *Duras* would expire seemed to ease his pain. “In ten days I shall know,” he wrote again and again to his friends Ross and Williams, “whether I have had to deal with honest men or scoundrels.”

At last, on the 28th, a reply arrived, and it was favorable. Gourlade, the partner of James Moylan, who was also acting as commercial agent at L'Orient, had offered to buy the ship himself to relieve Jones's torment, and now received definite orders to pur-

chase it. But again, before Jones had had time to more than draw one breath of relief from his agony, another doubtful, temporizing letter arrived from M. de Chaumont, and Jones forthwith made up his mind to go to Paris to attend to his business himself.

In the journal drawn up for Louis XVI in the year 1786, in which all the incidents of his naval service are related with admirable clarity and succinctness, Jones stated that his reason for forming this decision was the accidental reading of a passage in Franklin's "Maxims of Poor Richard," in which he found the advice: "If you would have your business done, go yourself, if not, send."

In the first week of the new year he therefore proceeded to Paris, deciding, in case the minister should give him the *Duras*, to change her name to the *Bon Homme Richard*, to celebrate the wise axiom of "Poor Richard's Almanac," and the fame of its beloved author. His journey was productive of immediate and favorable results, for the minister received him with perfect courtesy and promised to procure him the ship without further delay. He also introduced him to Count Garnier, with whom he directed Jones to consult in regard to the plans for his proposed expedition. This gentleman was then at liberty at the court, having been recalled from his post as *chargé d'affaires* in London on account of the severing of diplomatic relations between France and England. In his journal for the King, Jones describes Count Garnier as "un homme d'un grand pénétration et d'un jugement sur." He found him exceedingly sympathetic and had



the greatest satisfaction in the association. He drew up for his inspection some very lucid papers in regard to the proper methods of conducting aggressive warfare against the enemy's coasts and the proper distribution of prize-money, offering, as he had done before in the case of the cruise in the *Alfred* and the *Providence*, to assist in defraying the expenses of the expedition from his own pocket.

The consideration he received at this time from the representatives of both governments must have been exceedingly gratifying to Jones's wounded pride. He was again received as a guest at Passy, and again enjoyed his agreeable intimacy with the admiring family of M. de Chaumont and his friendship with Doctor Bancroft. M. de Sartine now treated him with the utmost favor, intending apparently to atone for the neglect of the past. He gave Jones carte-blanche and sole command of the expedition, and offered him a large ship of war, the *Maréchal de Broglie*, of sixty-four guns, then lying at Nantes. He proposed also to give him three or four frigates and two or three cutters, with a corps of five hundred men from Walsh's Irish regiment, to make the land attacks. No French seamen were to be enlisted, however, and despairing of finding a sufficient number for the *Maréchal de Broglie*, Jones was compelled to refuse the splendid ship, and content himself, while waiting for the *Indien*, which Sartine again promised him, with the *Duras*.

On the 4th of February the minister issued to him in writing the King's formal bestowal of the ship, and announced that he was permitted to change her name

according to his desire. Jones replied in the following letter:

PASSY, *Feb. 6th, 1779.*

M. DE SARTINE, *Minister of Marine, Versailles.*

*My Lord:—*

I have the honor to receive your Excellency's letter dated the 1st, by the hands of Mr. Garnier. I take the earliest opportunity to offer you my sincere and grateful thanks for so singular and honorable a mark of your confidence and approbation.

It shall be my duty to represent in the strongest terms to Congress, the generous and voluntary resolution which their great ally, the protector of the rights of human nature, and the best of kings, has taken to promote the honor of their flag, and I beseech you to assure his Majesty that my heart is impressed with the deepest sense of the obligation which I owe his condescending favor and good opinion and which it shall be my highest ambition to merit, by rendering every service in my power to the common cause; I cannot ensure success, but I will endeavor to deserve it.

I beg leave to assure your Excellency that I will carefully observe your present as well as future instructions, and that I will communicate to you from time to time a faithful account of my proceedings.

I will avail myself of the authority which you have given me to raise French volunteers to serve as marines, as I fear there may not be easily found a sufficient number of American seamen.

It has always been my custom to treat my people and prisoners with hospitality and kindness, and you may be assured that I shall ever take pleasure in promoting the happiness of every person under my command.

Your having permitted me to alter the name of the

ship has given me a pleasing opportunity of paying a well merited compliment to a great and good man to whom I am under obligations, and who honors me with his friendship.

I am in the fulness and grateful affection of my heart, and with perfect esteem and respect,

My Lord,

Yours &c.

It was now time for Jones to commence active preparations. He left Paris, therefore, on the 12th and journeyed to St. Malo to recruit as many seamen as possible at that port. From thence, without delay, he went to L'Orient, where the several ships of his squadron were ordered to assemble.

The beautiful, fast-sailing *Alliance*, had just arrived in Europe, bringing over Lafayette, under the command of Pierre Landais, and Jones wrote soon after his arrival at L'Orient to Count Garnier asking him to request Franklin to join her to his squadron. He announced some difficulty in obtaining proper cannon for the *Poor Richard*, and said that he was afraid he would have to make search for them himself. He took a few days of repose before proceeding upon these journeys, during which time he wrote the remarkable letter to Franklin in which he informed him of the killing of the mutineer at Tobago. The innocent mystery which Franklin had asked Jones to explain, arising from the practical joking of the mischievous Mlle. de Chaumont and her maid, most strangely brought about the painful confession.<sup>1</sup> The "misfortune of his life"

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Franklin to Jones, March, 1779, Appendix

was never revealed by his devoted friends, nor did it alter in any perceptible manner the warmth of their affection for him. Jones's idea of friendship was a very high one; his candid nature could not endure a relationship which was limited by a shadow of concealment. He requested that the letter containing his confession should also be shown to Doctor Bancroft, for whom he had the strongest affection, and upon whom he relied for advice and assistance in every emergency.

In his prompt and energetic efforts to persuade Sartine to keep his promises to Jones, Bancroft had shown that he deserved this confidence, and when Jones had the opportunity of serving him in investigating the serious charges that Bancroft had sold his knowledge of the approaching commercial alliance between France and America in England for the purpose of speculating in stocks, he was no less active in Bancroft's behalf. In common with every associate of the commissioners, Bancroft's honesty had been questioned by Arthur Lee, and Jones was the instrument of clearing him from suspicion. At a much later time Lee retracted these charges himself, owing to the "fuller information" which he had received when it was disclosed that he himself had been the dupe of his two secretaries, Thornton and Ford, who, as spies in the pay of the English Government, had duly forwarded information in regard to the treaty.

Having sent off Lieutenant Amiel and other officers whom he had found at Nantes to various points to recruit seamen, Jones now started on his long and very

exhausting search for cannon. He went to Bordeaux, and thence to Angoulême, where he at last found a foundry where they might be made, then to Nantes, back to L'Orient, and once again to Nantes. At the latter port he again enjoyed the delight of daily association with his beloved Jonathan Williams, who assisted him in the revaluation of the Selkirk plate, and also helped in the vigorous search for recruits.

He was wellnigh exhausted by all this journeying, when, on the 9th of April, he was met at Nantes by an express from Paris commanding his immediate presence at the capital for an important consultation with Doctor Franklin and the minister of marine. He started without delay to obey this summons, taking Jonathan Williams as far as L'Orient. Within forty-eight hours from L'Orient he was in Paris, and discovered that the reason for the summons arose from Franklin's desire to associate Lafayette with him in his approaching cruise. The Marquis de Lafayette had no sooner arrived in Paris and been informed of Jones's daring plans for attacking the coast of England than he declared his ardent desire to join the expedition. His proposal was cordially received by Franklin and sanctioned by the Count de Vergennes. A new and most attractive prospect was thus opened out to Jones, who accepted the idea of a joint expedition with Lafayette with enthusiasm. It was proposed that the general should himself command a force of seven hundred picked men for the purpose of making the land attacks, and plans were concerted and decided upon between them with Count Garnier's assistance, which,

as Jones said, "would have astonished the world." Jones was promised an increased naval force, and nothing was lacking to show the confidence and good intentions of the minister.

Jones remained in Paris only long enough to perfect these plans, and then returned to L'Orient to hasten the equipment of the squadron. A few days after his departure Franklin wrote a letter to Jones under the belief that Lafayette was about to join him at L'Orient, in which he gave the two young men the benefit of his affectionate and paternal advice.

To Capt. John Paul Jones:

*27th of April*

MY DEAR SIR:

I have at the request of M. de Sartine postponed the sending of the *Alliance* to America, and have ordered her to proceed immediately from Nantes to L'Orient, where she is to be furnished with her complement of men, join your little squadron, and act under your command.

The Marquis de La Fayette will be with you soon. It has been observed, that joint expeditions of land and sea forces, often miscarry through jealousies and misunderstandings between the officers of the different corps. This must happen where there are little minds, actuated more by personal views or profit or honor to themselves, than by the warm and sincere desire of good to their country. Knowing you both, as I do, and your just manner of thinking on these occasions, I am confident nothing of the kind can happen between you, and that it is unnecessary for me to recommend to either of you, that condescension, mutual good will, and harmony, which contribute so much to success in

such undertakings. I look upon this expedition as an introduction only to greater trusts and more extensive commands, and as a kind of trial of both your abilities, and of your fitness in temper and disposition for acting in concert with others. I flatter myself, therefore, that nothing will happen that may give impressions to the disadvantage of either of you, when greater affairs shall come under consideration.

As this is understood to be an American expedition, under the Congress commission and colours, the Marquis, who is a Major General in that service, has of course the step in point of rank, and he must have the command of the land forces, which are committed by the King to his care; but the command of the ships will be entirely in you, in which I am persuaded that whatever authority his rank might in strictness give him, he will not have the least desire to interfere with you. There is honour enough to be got for both of you, if the expedition is conducted with a prudent unanimity. The circumstance is indeed a little unusual; for there is not only a junction of land and sea forces, but there is also a junction of Frenchmen and Americans, which increases the difficulty of maintaining a good understanding; a cool prudent conduct in the chiefs is therefore the more necessary, and I trust neither of you will in that respect be deficient. With my best wishes for your success, health, and honour, I remain, dear Sir, your affectionate and most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

Franklin sent with this letter official instructions containing a prohibition against following England's example in the wanton destruction of property, expressly forbidding the burning of any town except in case of the refusal of a reasonable ransom.

On the same 27th of April, as the result of his consultations with Franklin, Lafayette wrote for the first time to Paul Jones, expressing the confidence which he had immediately conceived for the man whose genius and ambitions were so peculiarly sympathetic to his own. The plans which had been concerted between Jones and Lafayette in consultation with Count Garnier had not been communicated by Jones to M. de Chaumont, and Jones was displeased when he found that he had become aware of them. Lafayette evidently shared this feeling, for he wrote that M. de Chaumont was "determined" to undertake the journey to L'Orient. Lafayette also wrote that he considered it inadvisable that any military should be put upon the *Alliance*, for he had had a full experience of Landais's eccentricities during his passage across the Atlantic, and he gave as his reason that he feared that Captain Landais would get into trouble with his officers. "Although this command is not equal to my military rank," Lafayette wrote, "the love of the common cause makes me very happy to undertake it, and as this motive is the only one which contrrolls all my private and public affairs, I am sure that I shall find in you the same zeal, and we shall do as much and more than any others in the same situation." He concluded his letter with the warmest expressions of friendship, and a promise, which he loyally kept to the close of his life, that that friendship should never end. "Be certain, my dear Sir, that I shall be happy to divide with you whatever share of glory may await us, and that my esteem and affection for you is truly felt, and will last forever."



The messenger who brought these letters to Paul Jones might well have come from Olympian heights. Not even in the hour of the unique victory which was to crown his brief career could his glory-loving heart have felt a deeper, more satisfying happiness than when he read these words of affection and confidence from Lafayette and Franklin.

On the day of their arrival he sent the following replies expressing in almost solemn engagements his intention of meriting their confidence:

L'ORIENT *May 1, 1779.*

MAJOR GENERAL DE LA FAYETTE,—

I have, my dear Marquis, this day had the singular pleasure of receiving your very esteemed letter by the hands of M. de Chaumont; so flattering and affectionate a proof of your esteem and friendship has made an impression on my mind that will attend me while I live. This I hope to prove by more than words. Where men of fine feelings are concerned there is seldom misunderstanding; and I am sure I should do violence to my sensibility if I were capable of giving you a moment's pain by any part of my conduct. Therefore, without any apology, I shall expect you to point out my errors when we are together alone with perfect freedom, and I think I dare promise your reproof shall not be lost.

M. de Chaumont is now endeavoring to settle matters with respect to the cannon. I hope he will succeed, and if so, the *Bon Homme Richard* may soon be got ready. I could say more with respect to the accommodation of the men. I hope no difficulty will arise, for she can carry 350 or 400, should there be occasion.

I have received from the good Dr. Franklin, instructions at large which do honor to his liberal mind, and which it will give me the truest satisfaction to execute.

I cannot ensure success, but will endeavor to deserve it.

With sincere esteem and affection of my heart, and with the truest regard and respect, I am always,

Yours &c.

J. P. JONES.

L'ORIENT, *May 1, 1779.*

HIS EXCELLENCY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,

*Honored and Dear Sir:*

The letter I had the honor to receive from you to-day, together with your liberal and noble-minded instructions, would make a coward brave. You have called up every sentiment of public virtue in my breast, and it shall be my pride and my ambition, in the strict pursuit of your instructions, to deserve success.

Be assured that very few prospects could afford me so true a satisfaction as that of rendering some acceptable service to the common cause, and at the same time relieving from captivity (by furnishing the means of exchange) our unfortunate fellow subjects from the hands of the enemy.

It only remains for me to return your Excellency, my thanks for past instances of your friendship, especially in the last of your particular confidence.

I am, and shall be to the end of my life, with the most affectionate esteem and respect,

Honored and Dear Sir,

Yours &c.

Paul Jones had need of the strength which always came to him from the encouragement and appreciation of his friends, for his health had so severely suffered by his constant journeyings that he was obliged to take to his bed.

Under these conditions the business of recruiting the seamen proceeded with difficulty. The volunteers who had been enrolled at Nantes were all sent back as being entirely unfit for service. Jones had fortunately been able to engage thirty reliable seamen from among some American prisoners who had been sent to L'Orient in a cartel, but he was compelled to recruit also a number of raw French peasants from the neighboring fields to make up the necessary complement, and believing that the soldiers who were to sail with him under Lafayette's command would keep them in order, he also shipped a number of English prisoners from the jails of Brest and Saint Malo, making, as he declared, "as bad a crew as was ever embarked on any vessel." The cannon had failed to arrive from Angoulême for the *Bon Homme Richard*, and he therefore armed her with an old battery of twenty-eight nine and twelve pounders on the main deck, and placed six old eighteen-pounders on the gun-deck. This was an exceedingly dangerous proceeding, except in smooth water, which Jones explained he expected to find in the enemy's harbors. These, with the cannon of the forecastle and quarter-deck, brought her armament to forty-two guns. The zealous M. de Chaumont had purchased the *Pallas*, a merchant-ship which he had found at Nantes, and fitted her up in the greatest possible haste with thirty-two twelve-pounders. A small brig, the *Vengeance*, he had also mounted with twelve three-pounders. This ship now arrived at L'Orient to join the *Bon Homme Richard*, as well as the *Cerf*, a fine cutter from the royal marine, and the *Alliance* of thirty-six guns, which, according to Jones's request, had

been added to his force. These five ships made up Jones's little squadron, and the last two were actually the only ones which were fit for service. The soldiers were ordered to embark, and Jones was waiting for Lafayette's arrival when a letter came from him announcing that, owing to the indiscreet communication of the secret of the expedition to M. de Chaumont, the minister had ordered that the troops should not sail and that Lafayette should rejoin his regiment. Again disappointment destroyed the ardent hopes of Paul Jones at the very moment when they seemed about to be realized. The original plan of the expedition, which was no less than to lay Liverpool under contribution, as well as those which Jones had secretly perfected with Count Garnier, were also all abandoned in favor of a much less important expedition with four ships furnished by the Swedish minister.

At this unhappy moment Jones was also informed that Count Garnier had been superseded, as adviser and representative of the minister, by M. de Chaumont. Count Garnier had been promised the post of minister to the United States, a promise which was barren of result, and M. de Chaumont, as the direct representative of the court, assumed not only the office of commissary for the equipment of the ships, but took to himself, in virtue of his high authority, the position of general manager of the entire squadron.

The responsibility of communicating the secret of the expedition to M. de Chaumont lay at the door of M. de Sartine, as the following letter from Lafayette to the Count de Vergennes discloses:

FRANCE, ARCHIVES ETRANGERES,  
(Translation)

PARIS, 1st April 1779

To the COUNT DE VERGENNES:—

Sir:—

From what M. de Sartine has said to me, I requested M. de Chaumont yesterday to send and seek for Captain Jones, and although the place of his present residence is unknown, our messenger will do all that he possibly can to bring him immediately. I entrusted to him a somewhat urgent letter for Jones, and as Dr. Franklin was not at home, I left one also for him, in which I gave our desire to see the captain, the appearance of a consultation, rather than that of any definite plan.

The time I passed with M. de Chaumont enabled me to learn what I shall now have the honor of confiding to you. The armament of the *Bon Homme Richard*, (the vessel of fifty guns) goes on in the slowest possible manner. The refusal of the stores from the King's magazine, especially the guns, will retard our expedition for a whole month, because it will be the same for all the other ships. The only way to obviate such delay would be to put one man in charge of this armament, and send him to the ports with orders to take all that was necessary. I have discovered that Jones had a little plan for an enterprise, formed under the direction of Garnier, and in which M. de Chaumont is concerned. From the manner in which M. de Sartine sent for him, making M. de Chaumont a half confidant, (the most dangerous of all things because it gives information, without binding to secrecy) I think it would now be as well to communicate to him the secret of the armament, without betraying that of the expedition, and to charge him to employ therein

all his activity. The other person, (Garnier) need no longer in that case take any part in it, and according to the orders received by M. de Sartine, it appeared to me, from what M. de Chaumont said, that the *Bon Homme Richard*, and other vessels, would be in readiness before the expiration of three weeks.

I intend to have the honor of paying my respects to you after dinner on Saturday. If you approve of my idea, M. Le Compte, M. de Chaumont, or any other person you please, might be summoned at the same time; for by ordinary methods we shall never finish.

I hope that in consideration of my aversion to delays in military affairs, and for the sake of a project which you approve, you will be good enough to pardon the trouble which my confidence gives you.

I have the honor to be, with very sincere respect and attachment, M. le Compte, •

Your very humble and very obedient servant.

The generous offer made by M. de Chaumont to Lafayette, to supply him with the necessary funds for the armament of the squadron, was evidently the cause of the enlargement of the powers of M. de Chaumont, as well as the confidential relation which he enjoyed with M. de Sartine and the King himself.

M. de Chaumont had not been fitted by his experience as a manufacturer of ceramics, or by his late honorable prerogatives as "Maître des Eaux et des Forêts," for such powers, and his indiscretion and the extraordinary orders which he issued more than justified Jones's apprehensions. In spite of the unfortunate result of his revelation of the secret of the proposed expedition, M. de Chaumont continued his misdirected efforts to establish rules for the manage-

ment of the little squadron, and on the 10th and 14th of June issued written orders forbidding Jones to require any services from the ships under his ostensible command, which differed from the designs of their respective captains. The four captains, Cottineau of the *Pallas*, Ricot of the *Vengeance*, Varage of the *Cerf*, and Landais of the *Alliance*, who were severally placed on these vessels under the orders of M. de Chaumont, therefore considered themselves perfectly free to carry out their own ideas without any reference to Jones. Moreover, M. de Chaumont, by instilling the idea into the entire personnel of the squadron that he was the manager of the expedition and the agent of the King, caused the opinion to prevail that it was a French squadron, and that its captain was a stranger to be viewed with suspicion. "According to my opinion," wrote Jones to the King, "it was hardly possible for the commissary to render a worse service to his country, as the King had made the generous resolution to maintain at his own expense and under the American flag, the squadron which he had confided to my direction, and as I had given all the commissions to the American officers, it was important for the good of the service that they should believe that they were in the service of the Congress, and that the squadron belonged to the United States."

All hopes of harmonious action were lost by the strange directions of M. de Chaumont. In spite of these unheard-of hindrances and complications, Jones attempted to establish the best possible relations with his associated captains, and to keep his temper with the

commissary, whose errors he believed were of "the head and not of the heart." Two of the best officers on the *Alliance* deserted at this juncture on account of their difficulties with Landais; Jones permitted this in hopes of maintaining harmony on the best ship of his squadron, writing carefully to John Adams to inform him as to the actual causes of the difficulty. He was still expecting that Lafayette would eventually join him when he received a letter from the marquis informing him that their happy idea of a joint expedition must be definitely abandoned.

At the moment of receiving this disappointing intelligence Jones wrote the following letter to Franklin, showing that he was able, in this instance at least, to accept the inevitable with philosophy:

L'ORIENT, *May 22, 1779*

HONORED AND DEAR SIR:—

Since I had the honor to receive your kind and polite letter of the 10th, I have waited with impatient expectation of seeing the Marquis here. The *Bon Homme Richard*, the *Alliance*, the *Pallas*, and *Cerf*, and the *Vengeance* are now ready in the road, for the embarkment of the troops. This little armament was not I may say begun before the 12th of this month; since then the people concerned in it have been employed night and day, and I have flattered myself with hopes of success and honor. Judge then of my disappointment when instead of seeing the Marquis, I have received a letter from him in which he tells me that "the king's disposition is entirely changed, and that instead of meeting me here, he is now going to take command of the King's regiment at Saints." Extraordinary as this change is, it is not my place to



inquire into the reasons for it, and tho' the expense of the armament may perhaps exceed the usual amount, I am certain that the alteration cannot be attributed to any want of activity on my part. I am ready to follow any plan you please to adopt, or if anything is left to me, you may depend on my best endeavors either in Europe or America. It would have added greatly indeed to my happiness to have been joined in command with a character so amiable as the Marquis, and I am very unwilling to drop the expectation of his coming here. His letter was but this moment brought to my hands, and to save the post I am obliged to shorten my letter.

I have the honor to be, with honest affection and esteem in all changes,

Honored and Dear Sir,

Your very obliged friend, and obliged servant.

The reason for the change in the plans of the French Government arose from intimations which were communicated to the King by his uncle of Spain that he was about to join in the war against England. M. de Sartine now planned what Franklin in a private letter called "the grand invasion," which was, indeed, a project for a general attack upon England by the combined forces of France and Spain. Preparations for this extensive design were put into active progress, and Lafayette, as the destined commander of the land forces, was compelled to withdraw from the expedition planned for Jones's small squadron. "I dare say," the marquis wrote to Jones on the 22d of May, "that you will be very sorry to hear that our plans have been quite altered. I can only tell you how sorry I feel not to be a witness of your success, abilities, and glory."

With the definite withdrawal of Lafayette and his soldiers the prospects of controlling his motley crew, with its dangerous force of English prisoners, became exceedingly doubtful, but Jones had no alternative but to await sailing orders from Franklin, which finally arrived in the shape of a letter communicating to him Sartine's desire that he should go out in a short preliminary cruise, in which he was to convoy some merchant-ships from L'Orient to Bordeaux and to chase the enemy's ships out of the Bay of Biscay. Although by no means corresponding with the ambitious plans which he had made, Jones proceeded to obey these orders with his customary alacrity, and put to sea in the *Bon Homme Richard*, together with the other ships of his squadron and his convoy of merchantmen, on the 19th of June. This little expedition was destined to be fruitful in many lessons but few results. On the 20th his long series of difficulties with Landais began; during the night the *Alliance* came into collision with the *Bon Homme Richard* on account of Landais refusing to give his commander's ship the right of way. Considerable damage was done to both of the ships, the *Richard* losing her cut-water and jib-boom, and the *Alliance* her mizzen-mast. The blame for this accident was chiefly owing to the insubordination of Landais in deliberately disregarding Jones's signal, and to his disgraceful cowardice at the moment of the accident, when he gave no orders, but ran below to load his pistols, leaving his vessel to be extricated from her dangerous situation by his subordinates. Jones was below at the time of this accident, but immediately

took command in the place of his own inefficient officer of the watch, and succeeded in separating the ships. The two vessels were repaired with all speed and Jones proceeded to carry out his orders. After escorting his convoy to Bordeaux, he went into the Bay of Biscay, and in his effort to come up with various English ships he found, to his infinite annoyance, that the *Bon Homme Richard* was a hopelessly dull sailer. His fears of trouble with the English prisoners were also quickly realized, for they formed a plot to take the *Bon Homme Richard*, which was fortunately discovered in time and its ringleaders put in irons. Jones's conduct of this short and relatively unimportant cruise is full of indications of his character and of his aptitude for command. Confronted with a disabling accident and the dangers of a formidable plot to take the ship, he immediately attempted to improve the efficiency of his officers by issuing complete and detailed rules for their direction, and by constant and personal consultation.

On the day after the collision he sent the *Cerf*, as being the fastest ship in his squadron, to reconnoitre two sail. After a sharp engagement the *Cerf* came up with one of them, a sloop of fourteen guns, and captured her, but on the approach of a superior force was compelled to abandon the prize and return to L'Orient to refit. On the 22d three ships of war appeared to windward and bore down in order, but, finding Jones ready to engage, escaped by superior sailing. A few days later the *Alliance* and the *Pallas* were lost in a thick fog, and when the two remaining ships came in

sight of the Island of Groix, off L'Orient, on the 26th, in a contrary gale, Jones gave the *Vengeance* permission to make her way into port as best she could.

The time allotted to him in his orders now being elapsed, Jones prepared to return to L'Orient, when he found himself at nightfall in close proximity to two large British frigates. He was alone in the *Bon Homme Richard* and chased by the frigates, who were rapidly overtaking him. He immediately tacked to engage them, but when they perceived his intentions the frigates ran away, and, as he related, "to his great mortification outsailed the *Bon Homme Richard* and got clear." Thus Jones lost an opportunity, so brilliantly exemplified in the case of the engagement of the *Constitution* with the *Cygne* and the *Levant* in the War of 1812, of beating two superior English frigates at once. "I would have taken them both together," he declared, "if I had been able to get between them as had been my intention."

An entry in the log-book of the *Bon Homme Richard* gives an account of Jones's dealing with his officers on this occasion:

30th June. At half past 7 P. M. saw two sail bearing down upon us, one with a flag at each mast head. Hove about and stood from them to get in readiness for action; then hove mizzen-topsail to the mast, down all stay-sails and up mizzen-sail. Then they hove about and stood from us. Immediately we tacked ship and stood after them.

After which they wore ship and stood for us. Captain Jones, gentleman-like, called all his officers, and

consulted them whether they were willing to see them. They all said, Yes. Made sail after them; but they, being better sailors than we, got from us. At 1 A. M. tacked ship.

An interesting example of his methods of getting the very best possible service out of his crews is contained in the written acknowledgment of his appreciation of the conduct of his officers and men on the eve of the expected engagement with the frigates:

It is with singular satisfaction that the Captain returns his thanks to the officers and men for the noble ardour and marshall spirit which they manifested last night when in chase of two ships of war, which appeared to be Enemies, whom we expected every moment to engage.—

But who saved themselves by their superior swiftness of sailing and by a most shameful Flight.—

The ship is now bound into port for a few days, after which we shall depart again better fitted;—and it shall be the Captain's endeavor to search after a Fortune equal to the Merit of every Man, of every free American and brave volunteer whom he has the honor to command.—

Given on board the American

Ship of War, the *Bon Homme Richard*  
off Port Louis, the 30th  
Of June, 1779.

Some of the men were those very English prisoners who had joined in the plot to take the *Bon Homme Richard*, but once convinced of Jones's capacity to preserve discipline, and inspired, as his seamen never failed to become at the moment of conflict, by the

example of his own enthusiasm, they evinced a spirit of bravery so commendable that Jones made particular reference to them in the account of his cruise, which he drew up for Franklin and Sartine on the following day, when he arrived at Groix. This report of the 30th of June crossed on the way to Paris new instructions for a further expedition which Franklin, in ignorance of the damages to the *Alliance* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, intended should be carried out immediately:

Being arrived at Groix, you are to make the best of your way with the vessels under your command to the West of Ireland, and establish your cruise on the Orcades, the Cape of Derneus, and the Dogger Bank, in order to take the enemy's property in those seas.

The prizes you may make, send to Dunkirk, Ostend, or Bergen, in Norway, according to your proximity to either of those ports. Address them to the persons M. de Chaumont shall indicate to you.

About the 15th of August, when you will have sufficiently cruised in these seas, you are to make route for the Texel, where you will meet my further orders.

If by any personal accident you should be rendered unable to execute these instructions, the officer of your squadron next in rank is to endeavor to put them in execution.

The slow sailing of the *Bon Homme Richard*, as shown in this first cruise, had naturally been a severe disappointment to Jones, and his discontent with his vessel was further increased by the discovery that her timbers were too old and rotten to permit of some alterations which he had contemplated.

He therefore reported these facts to Franklin, asking

if there might not be now a chance for the *Indien*, saying that he wished "for an opportunity of attempting an essential service to render himself worthy a better and faster sailing ship." He also suggested a change in the destination of his next cruise, to which Franklin replied that no alteration in Jones's present orders could then be expected, but he hinted by way of encouragement that he believed the French minister had chosen the Texel as the ultimate destination of the cruise, with the idea of there giving Jones the command of the *Indien*.

The degree of equanimity with which Paul Jones accepted this ultimatum probably drew largely upon his limited store of philosophy. He had "almost half-killed himself" in his efforts to get his ship, and on the first trial of her qualities found that she was hopelessly slow—in fact, the dullest sailer of the whole squadron. The cannon for which he had taken exhausting journeys over nearly the whole of France failed to arrive, and his guns were old, like his vessel, and had most of them been condemned by the French Government; but the die was cast, it was the *Bon Homme Richard* or nothing, and he was ready to risk all on the hope of some desperate chance, where her slow sailing might not hinder him. In this temper he proceeded with all haste to the business of refitting his ship, but here again he was met with the usual delays and complications. In the interval of preparation, M. de Chaumont sent orders from Paris for the *Pallas* and the *Vengeance* to go out cruising for privateers, a proceeding which caused Jones great annoyance

on account of the delay which their possible disablement might entail upon the immediate sailing of the whole squadron and the execution of his orders from Franklin.

M. de Chaumont was at this juncture again in Paris and in consultation with Franklin, and was also informed by Sartine of the plans adopted for this second expedition.

With the disastrous result of the commissary's indiscretion in revealing the secret of the joint expedition with Lafayette still fresh in his mind, it is not surprising that Jones was annoyed to find that M. de Chaumont had divulged the destination of his approaching cruises to various officers at L'Orient. "This is surely a strange infatuation," he wrote to Franklin, "and it is much to be lamented that one of the best hearts in the world should be connected with a mistaken head, whose errors may affect the ruin and dishonor of the man whom he esteems and loves."

These apprehensions were not the only preoccupations of these anxious days, for Jones's time was now taken up with courts-martial assembled to try the ring-leaders of the plot which had been discovered during his recent cruise. These men, two quartermasters, were convicted and condemned to death, but, to Jones's relief, the sentence was changed to severe flogging with the "cat-o'-nine-tails."

The officer of the *Bon Homme Richard* whose carelessness had contributed to the collision with the *Alliance* was also tried and broken. These unfortunate occurrences were reported to Sartine, who immediately



formed a very poor opinion of the efficiency of the squadron, and of the *Bon Homme Richard* in particular, which Jones was now eager to reverse. In these unpleasant occupations many weeks dragged by. Nothing tried his patience more severely than delay, but in this instance it was providential, for it gave him the opportunity of improving the character of the *Bon Homme Richard's* crew.

The minister, thinking it wise to control the dangerous element among Jones's seamen, sent a force of marines to join the ship under Lieutenant-Colonel Chamillard de Warville and Colonel Weibert, two officers recommended by Lafayette. One hundred and thirty-seven Portuguese seamen, lately arrived at L'Orient in the *Epervier*, were also added to his force. When the news came that a cartel of American prisoners had arrived at Nantes, Jones sent his master, Mr. Cutting Lunt, to that port to recruit as many as possible. Among these men, who were destined to render him such heroic support in the celebrated cruises on which he was now to embark, was Richard Dale, then but twenty-three years old and just emerged from a two years' captivity in the mill prison at Portsmouth; youthful and in ill health from his rigorous and long confinement, Jones immediately recognized his character and capacity, and gave him a commission as first lieutenant of the *Bon Homme Richard*. These American seamen were the bone and sinew of his crew, without whose honesty and courage the story of the cruise and the fame of its commander might have borne a different character in history. The business

of recruiting seamen was by no means left to his officers, for, in spite of his poor health, resulting from the trials and fatigues of the winter, Jones spared neither time nor trouble to persuade any likely seaman whom he found at L'Orient to ship with him. Among those who had joined the *Alliance*, possibly on her arrival at Nantes, were Thomas Chase and Joe Frederick, both released from the English prisons, and immediately recognized by Jones. An amusing account of his methods of inducing seamen to sign the ship's articles is left by Nathaniel Fanning in his records of his experiences under Jones's command.<sup>1</sup>

The crew of the *Richard* was now swelled by these various additions to the number of three hundred and eighty men and boys, including one hundred and thirty-seven marines. Among the officers of all degrees, according to the official list published by Sherburne from Jones's papers, there were eight Americans, two French, and six British, including the commodore and the two surgeon's mates. Dale was first lieutenant, Henry and Cutting Lunt were second and third lieutenants, and Samuel Stacy and Lawrence Brooke were master and surgeon, respectively. Lieutenants Stack, McCarthy, and O'Kelly, from Walsh's Irish regiment, were officers of the marines under Chamillard and Weibert, and John White was first mate. Thomas

<sup>1</sup> "His smoothness of tongue and flattery to seamen when he wanted them was persuasive, and in which he excelled any other man I was ever acquainted with. In fact, I have seen him walk to and fro upon the quay in L'Orient for hours together with a single seaman, in order to persuade him to sign the ship's articles (which he commanded) and in which he was often successful."

Potter, Nathaniel Fanning, with about seventy other Americans, were enrolled as midshipmen and seamen, and the others, full four-fifths of the ship's company, were a motley collection of Portuguese, Malays, and Swedes, together with the English prisoners whom, with great reluctance, Jones was forced to retain to make up the necessary complement. They were nearly a hundred in number, and represented a most dangerous element of insubordination and possibly mutiny.

Six weeks had now passed by since Jones had returned to port to refit his ship, and the time was at hand once more to put to sea. The period allotted for the duration of the cruise was lengthened by Franklin to the end of September, at Jones's request, and his spirit was further encouraged by the evident harmony which seemed at that time to exist among the captains of the squadron, when, to Jones's infinite annoyance, his zealous friend, the commissary, once more appeared at L'Orient, and at the last moment imposed upon him a strange paper called the "Concordat." This "Concordat" was the most extraordinary document ever conceived for the confounding of the commander-in-chief of a squadron. The orders which had already been issued to Jones by M. de Chaumont before his first cruise, expressly forbidding him to require any services from the ships of his squadron which would interfere with the orders of their respective captains, were confirmed by the terms of the "Concordat," which now deprived Jones of the least shadow of that unconditional authority which should have belonged to him as the superior officer of the squadron.

The several captains were ordered by the minister, through M. de Chaumont, to act solely under the brevet of the United States, but were in no manner required to yield obedience to their commander, except as it suited their discretion. Other articles provided that the prizes should be sent to consignees of M. de Chaumont's selection, for the reason that he had supplied the expenses of the armament, and that the division of the prize-money, although governed by American laws, should in reality be administered solely by M. de Chaumont himself, to whom every member of the expedition should apply for his proportion. This irregular arrangement was productive of great injustice in the matter of the award of the prize-money, and an interminable delay in its distribution.

This extraordinary paper was levelled at Jones's head at the very moment of his departure, but as the commissary asserted that he represented Sartine, with full power to remove Jones from the command of the squadron, and as all the other officers had affixed their signatures, Jones found himself compelled to sign his name to the detested paper. "Under any other circumstances, and at any other time," he wrote to the King, "I should have rejected this proposal with disdain. I saw all the dangers which I was incurring, but as I had announced in America that I had remained in Europe at the request of the French Court, I decided to risk them all."<sup>1</sup> No adequate reason for the issuing of this paper has ever been advanced by any of Jones's biographers. The manifest inexperience and ill judg-

<sup>1</sup> Appendix G.

ment of its author, added to his desire to realize some profit on his investments in the expedition of the allied powers, undoubtedly furnished M. de Chaumont's personal reasons for imposing it upon Jones, and the "cabals" of the jealous French officers which, as Jones relates, were so "high and dangerous" as to have brought about his instant assassination, if the minister had diverted any considerable force to his command, undoubtedly influenced Sartine's approval of the agreement. To sail under the absolute authority of a little-known officer of so new a power as the United States was possibly more than any French officer was willing to submit to.<sup>1</sup>

The self-control which the long winter of disappointments and delays had taught him enabled him now to

<sup>1</sup> John Adams, who had come to L'Orient with the expectation of returning to America on the *Alliance*, gives the following account of a dinner given by Jones to the various officers of the *Bon Homme Richard* and *Alliance*.

JOHN ADAMS'S DIARY.

"Thursday. Went on shore and dined with Captain Jones at the *Epée Royale*. Amiel, Mr. Dick, Dr. Brooks, officers of the *Poor Richard*, Captain Casneau, Captain Young, Mr. Ingraham, Mr. Blodgett, Mr. Glover, Mr. Conant, Messrs. Moyland, Mease, Nesbit, Cummings, and Mr. Taylor made the company with Captain Landais, myself and my son.

"An elegant dinner we had, and very agreeable and instructive conversation; but we practiced the old American custom of drinking to each other, which I confess is always agreeable to me. Some hints about language and glances about women produced this observation;—that there were two ways of learning French, commonly recommended; take a mistress, and go to the Comedy. Dr. Brooks in his good humor 'Pray sir, which in your opinion is the best?' Answer in as good humor 'Perhaps both would teach it somewhat sooner than either.' But continued I, assuming my gravity, 'The language is no where better spoken than at the Comedie. The pulpit, the bar, the Academy of Sciences, and the Faculty of Medicine; none of them speak as accurately as the French Comedie.'"

bear this last indignity. The tact, and the wise and conciliatory methods of dealing with complicated and trying conditions, which he had already displayed in his gentleman-like treatment of his subordinates in the first short cruise of his squadron, were now exhibited in his efforts to establish harmonious relations with the associate commanders. He endeavored in repeated consultations to replace authority by personal ascendancy, and to assure as large a measure of concerted action as was possible under the circumstances. For this purpose he issued orders to the respective captains, requesting strict regard to signals, and giving into the hands of each sealed letters of rendezvous in case of separation from the flag-ship. Two privateers offered to join the squadron as volunteers, swelling the number of his ships to seven, and he now prepared to sail.

On the 11th of August he wrote to Sartine, explaining that the unguarded English prisoners had caused the troubles on his ship, and reminding him that the minister's withdrawal of the marines at the last moment of sailing had been responsible for their insubordination. He wrote that, with the presence of the soldiers which Sartine had now placed upon his ship, he expected to be able to control them, and promised to send him direct accounts of the coming expedition. Two days later, on the eve of his departure, in a happy mood of expectation, he sent a farewell letter to Franklin saying that "the little squadron appeared to be unanimous, and that he believed if that good understanding should continue, that they would be able to perform essential services." "I

shall certainly sail at daybreak," he continued, "and I hope shortly to find opportunity to testify my gratitude to our great and good ally, for the honor he has conferred upon the American flag and on myself, and I look forward with flattering expectation and an ardent desire to merit your friendship and that of America." Another letter, brimful of affection and the expression of his eager desire sometime to make the joint expedition in his company, he sent to his friend Lafayette, thanking him for the presence and assistance of Messrs. Weibert and Chamillard, and assuring him of his happiness in being ranked among the number of his friends. A still more intimate expression of his feelings at the moment of departure is found in a letter belonging to this period, which he wrote to a woman, Madame de Chaumont, a letter hitherto unpublished, which furnishes a striking example of the power of his extraordinary personality and the delicate gallantry of his attitude toward one who had impulsively confessed that she had felt his charm.

On Board the *Bon Homme Richard*,  
L'ORIENT, June 13th.

Although my pen has hitherto been silent, yet my thoughts have done ample justice to the affectionate friendship of Madame de Chaumont. Since I last had the honor of seeing her, I have indeed had very little time to write, yet had I been sufficiently acquainted with her language she would have heard from me frequently.

As I have been so long under involuntary silence, you have a just right to expect me to say something that can make atonement in this letter, and I ardently wish

not to disappoint you. I feel however, that I never had more to say, nor less power to express myself.

I am on the point again of proving the uncertain fortunes of war. If I survive, I hope to return with laurels. I hope this, I say, because I am sure to take with me your good wishes, and because I know that my success would afford you pleasure.

To support the cause of human nature, I sacrifice all the soft emotions of the heart, at a time too when love is my duty. But my soul's supreme ambition is to merit the partial praises of my friends which I have not yet done by my services. I can only add, that whatever my future fortune may be, I shall carry with me through life, the most constant and lively sense of your polite attentions, and of your delicate and unreserved friendship.

I am, with sentiments of real esteem, affection and respect,

Madame,

Yours.

The exact relation which existed between Jones and his fair correspondent, who is said to have possessed unusual wit and attractiveness, must be left to conjecture. But a knowledge of her ardent admiration of the young American officer might easily have been one reason why M. de Chaumont sent Jones forth in the anomalous position of a commander-in-chief of a squadron without the slightest power to command.

The hour had now come for him to depart, and with a courage undaunted by the dangers of his situation, with a rotten ship, a makeshift armament, and a motley crew, he set sail on August the 14th on that cruise



which was destined to be his ultimate and crowning adventure, the opportunity to fulfil his soul's supreme ambition, and to "write his name with honor in the page of history."

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BATTLE OF THE "BON HOMME RICHARD" AND THE "SERAPIS"

ALTHOUGH Jones had received orders to sail to the north of Scotland to attack the enemy's commerce off the Orcades and the Dogger Bank, he had represented to Franklin that these definite directions might prevent his taking advantage of more favorable opportunities, which he hoped might fall in his way, and hinder the execution of other and far more extensive plans of his own which he had already projected. Franklin had yielded to his arguments, and, following the wise course which the American Government had pursued from the first in regard to their most successful and favorite naval officer, gave him *carte-blanche*.

In the conception and perfection of his plans for the cruise Paul Jones was therefore unhampered by his own government, but the unequalled and most unfortunate terms of the "concordat" which Sartine had permitted M. de Chaumont to impose upon him developed without delay a series of difficulties which would have utterly discouraged a less determined commander. That inflexible quality in his character which had at last procured him his command after a year of disappointments and delays was now about to be subjected to tests which ultimately revealed its wellnigh

superhuman endurance. But he was free at last from the surveillance of M. de Chaumont, and, once more at sea, he viewed his squadron with determined optimism. The addition of the two privateers had swelled its numbers to seven sail, "A force," he writes, "which might have affected great services and done infinite injury to the enemy, had there been due secrecy or subordination. Unfortunately there was neither. Captain Jones saw his danger, but his reputation being at stake he put all to the hazard."

Sailing at daybreak on the 14th, they arrived after four uneventful days off the entrance to the English Channel, where they recaptured the *Verwagting*, a large ship from Holland which had been taken a few days before by an English privateer, and here at once the folly of M. de Chaumont's "concordat" bore its legitimate results. The privateers *Monsieur* and *Grandville* had desired to sign the document, and to join the squadron on equal terms with the other vessels, but M. de Chaumont refused their request. "This arrogant conduct," wrote Jones, "caused general belief among the Americans, particularly on board of the *Alliance*, that the squadron belonged neither to the King or to Congress, but to the individuals who had supplied the armament of the vessels, and who were partners with M. de Chaumont in the expected profits of the expedition."

The privateers therefore associated themselves with the others by voluntary agreement only, and broke their engagements to abide by Jones's orders at the very first opportunity of securing a prize. The captain



CRUISE OF THE "BON HOMME RICHARD."



of the *Monsieur*, which was the boarding vessel, plundered the *Verwagting* during the night, and attempted to obtain the prize for himself, without reference to his commander-in-chief, by despatching it to Ostend under orders written in his own name and with a crew from his own vessel. Jones superseded these orders, and manning the prize with some of his own men sent her off to L'Orient with a letter to M. de Chaumont. The offended captain of the *Monsieur* hung about in the rear for twenty-four hours, and then disappeared under cover of night and did not rejoin the squadron. On the 23d, having taken several well-laden merchantmen from Ireland, they sighted Cape Clear, at the extreme southern point of the Irish coast, where they came up with another prize. At this time Jones was confronted with further difficulty due to his lack of authority over his squadron, and was given another example of what he might expect from the strange captain of the *Alliance*. “That afternoon being calm,” wrote Jones in his official record, “I sent some armed boats to take a brigantine that appeared in the new quarter. Soon after, in the evening, it became necessary to have a boat ahead of the ship to tow, as the helm could not prevent her from laying across the tide of flood, which would have driven us into a deep and dangerous bay situated between the rocks on the south called the Shallocks, and on the north called the Blaskets. The ship's boat being absent I sent my own barge ahead to tow the ship. The boats took the brigantine (she was called the *Fortune*) which was bound with a cargo of oil blubber and staves from New Foundland for

Bristol. This vessel I ordered to proceed immediately for Nantes or St. Malo. Soon after sunset the villains who towed the ship cut the rope and decamped with my barge. Sundry shots were fired to bring them to, without effect. In the meantime the Master of the *Bon Homme Richard*, without orders, manned one of the ship's boats, and with four soldiers pursued the barge in order to stop the deserters. The evening was clear and serene, but the zeal of that officer, Mr. Cutting Lunt, induced him to pursue too far, and a fog which came soon afterward prevented the boats from rejoining the ship, although I caused signal guns to be frequently fired. The fog and calm continued the next day till towards evening. In the afternoon Captain Landais came on board the *Bon Homme Richard* and behaved towards me with great disrespect, affirming in the most indelicate manner and language that I had lost my boat and people through my imprudence in sending boats to take a prize. He persisted in his reproaches though he was assured by Messrs. de Weibert and Chamillard that the barge was towing the ship at the time of the elopement, and that she had not been sent in pursuit of the prize. He was affronted because I would not, on the day before, suffer him to chase without my orders, and to approach the dangerous shore I have already mentioned, where he was an entire stranger, and where there was not sufficient wind to govern a ship. He told me he was the only American in the Squadron and was determined to follow his own opinion in chasing, when and where he thought proper, and in every other matter that concerned the

service, and that if we continued in that situation three days longer the squadron would be taken.”

The manner in which Jones met this violent attack upon his judgment and authority is related in Colonel Weibert's account<sup>1</sup> of the occurrence, wherein he expresses a very clear opinion of Landais's entirely unmanageable character, and testifies to Jones's conciliatory attitude and admirable self-control.

Among the many dangers which gathered like mocking fates about his devoted head none bore so fantastic

<sup>1</sup>“Comme depuis le Compagne de 1779 il y a eu des rapports varies et sourdement repandus contre le caractere privé ou social du Commodore Paul Jones, commandant cy devant l'Escadre du *Bon Homme Richard*, et comme entre autres ouidires ou propos mal fondees, il m'est parfois parvenu quec et officier avait donné un dementi formel au Sr. Landais cy devant Capitaine de l'*Alliance* relativement à la perte du canôt en vue de la Côte d'Irlande. C'est porquoi je declare et affirme que le Commodore Susdit, n'a jamais dit au dit Sr. Landais 'You lie' (vous mentes) mais bien les seuls et propres termes, 'it is an untruth' quil à plu au Sr. Landais d'interpreter en un dementi formel n'ayant jamais pu vaincre son humeur facheuse, opiniâtre, turbulante et insubordonee qu'il na cessé de montrer pendant toute la Campagne dessus. Je certifie en outre que le Commodore Paul Jones bien loin de commander avec hauteur et brutalite, comme il a plu à certains de la faire croire, qu'il a toujours été quoique tres strict et vif dans son service, doux, honnete, et tres indulgent non seulement vis à vis de ses officiers, mais encore envers le matelot et soldat, qu'il a toujours traité avec humanité. Comme j'ai été temoin présent de la querelle cy dessus, je dois avouer en conscience, que le Sr. Landais y à donne beaucuop Lieu par son ton arrogant, dont il s'en servit vis a vis de son commandant, au paisible bonnes et honnêtes raisons du quel il n'a jamais voulu se rendre; bien au contraire, par ce que, le Sr. Landais à repondu au Commodore, moi et le Lieut. Col. Chamillard tous les deux present dans les termes les plus grossiers les plus insultants, d'abord en Anglais quil rendait au plutot en Français, a fin que le Sr. Chamillard n'ignorait de rien. Toute la querelle cy dessus s'est passé dans la chambre de Poupe du *Bon Homme Richard*, le 23, au 29, Aout, de L'annee cy dessus. Je conclue par dire, que le Sr. Landais accompagnait ou affirmait ses propos offensants et tres scandaleux par les gestes, les plus provoquant. Philadelphia, le 28 Novembre 1781.”  
—Lt. Colonel Weibert.



a shape as Landais. Accepted by the careless home government without a question as to his antecedents, this cashiered French officer was yet to run a long and dangerous course before his eccentricities developed into the madness which properly explained his character.

At this moment, when his presence in Jones's strangely organized squadron boded the most serious trouble, no one suspected that he was more than insulting and insubordinate. Fortunate, indeed, if Jones and his French officers had realized the truth and then and there removed him from his command and placed him in confinement.

Unwilling to abandon his officers and boat, Jones now, with the advice and assistance of Captain Cottineau, of the *Pallas*, prevailed with the commander of the *Cerf* to go in search of them. From a later extract from Jones's journal, it appears that "Mr. Lunt perceived the *Cerf* on the day she was sent to reconnoitre and gladly approached her. The *Cerf* however mounted English Colors and fired upon the boat, when Mr. Lunt hastily retreated to the shore where he was captured and recommitted to the confinement of an English jail from which he had so lately been delivered, and where after some months he succumbed to his sufferings."<sup>1</sup>

After the departure of the *Cerf*, Jones hung around the coast in the greatest anxiety for several days,

<sup>1</sup> This extract is printed in Sands compilation; it is not found in Jones's journal to Louis XVI, and must belong to a draft of the same journal which was in the possession of Miss Taylor, and which is no longer in existence.

awaiting her return with the barge, but the cutter abandoned the squadron and returned to France. This was a serious loss, for she was the only properly armed ship of his force. The loss of his third lieutenant with twenty of his best Americans was even more unfortunate, and his discouragement was further increased by the disappearance of the second privateer, the *Grandville*, which, having secured a prize, decamped with it during the night.

The squadron was now reduced to four ships, the *Bon Homme Richard*, the *Alliance*, the *Pallas*, and the *Vengeance*; but Jones determined to lose no more time in attempting to perform some important service, and decided to steer his course around the north coast of Ireland, with the intention of intercepting a fleet of eight East Indiamen which he learned were on their way to London, but Landais, again insubordinate, refused to assist him, and under cover of night separated from the squadron.

Jones was now forced to abandon his plan, but steered his course around Ireland, taking various prizes on the way, when a few days later—on the 31st—Landais again put in an appearance, bringing the *Betsey*, a valuable West Indian, at the moment when Jones was in the act of chasing another ship, the *Union*, laden with ship supplies. By the 1st of September he had sailed around the northerly end of Scotland outside the Orkney Islands and into the North Sea. He had taken many prizes, but was exceedingly anxious to make an important attack upon the enemy's territory. He therefore requested the officers of his remaining vessels to

come on board the *Bon Homme Richard* to concert future operations. Landais insolently refused, informing Mr. Mease, Jones's purser, who had visited the *Alliance* in the hope of bringing him to reason, that he had the lowest opinion of the commander and would meet him on shore, "where they must kill one or the other." Unwilling to give up the hope of gaining his co-operation, Jones now requested Mr. Mease to take Captain Cottineau and Colonel Chamillard on board the *Alliance*, believing that the persuasions of his countrymen might prevail with Landais. More than an hour was wasted in fruitless argument, Landais utterly refusing to listen to the advice of his fellow-officers and continuing his insulting remarks in regard to the commodore.

At this juncture, as if to add to Jones's manifold difficulties, a heavy gale arose which continued from the 5th until the 13th of the month, during which time Landais again gave them the slip and went off to follow his own devices. The squadron had been working to the southward and arrived off the eastern entrance of the Firth of Forth. And now, although embarrassed with the large number of prisoners from his various prizes, Jones decided to attempt the execution of his favorite plan of laying Leith and Edinburgh under contribution, having heard from the captain of one of their prizes that the naval force in the harbor of Leith consisted of but one twenty-gun ship of war with three or four cutters, and knowing that the town itself was unprovided with batteries. He was again in familiar waters and hoped to accomplish his object before

the alarm of his presence had spread about the coast. "His purpose," he wrote, "was to teach the enemy humanity by some exemplary stroke of retaliation," to relieve the Americans still in captivity in England, as well as to make a diversion in the north in favor of a formidable descent which he then expected would have been made in the south side of Great Britain under cover of the great combined fleets of France and Spain.

This formidable descent, which Jones hoped to favor by making his attack upon the north, was none other than the grand invasion planned by the French court and intrusted to Lafayette. The great fleet under D'Orvilliers, the hope of France and the visible result of years of determined effort to restore its naval power, had already been beaten back by contrary winds when in sight of the English coast and, in company with the Spanish ships, had anchored at Brest on the same day on which Paul Jones appeared before the town of Leith. Exposed to the most unheard-of privations, half starved and decimated by disease, this great naval force had become utterly disorganized and useless in spite of its well-built ships, owing to the criminal carelessness or ignorance of M. de Sartine in its manner of equipment. The joint expedition originally planned for Jones and Lafayette, with less pretence, would unquestionably have escaped this disgraceful failure, and might in all probability have succeeded in doing some effectual service.

Having taken a small collier off the coast of Scotland, and promising the captain to restore his ship as the

price of being piloted up the Firth of Forth, Jones now summoned the captains of the *Pallas* and the *Vengeance* and urged their co-operation in his attack upon Leith. He assured them that the town was defenceless, and that the two hundred pounds ransom which he intended to demand might be gained without the smallest danger, and, although he finally obtained their consent, he spent the whole night in persuasion, and so much time was spent in "pointed remarks and sage deliberations" that they lost the favorable wind, which became contrary in the morning. He did not, however, abandon his design, but continued working to windward up the Firth. On the afternoon of the 17th the squadron was plainly seen from Edinburgh castle, and it was high time to make the attack.

The memory of Jones's last visit to the coast of Scotland was by no means forgotten by the inhabitants, and the rumor of his dreaded presence now spread rapidly through the country, causing the wildest alarm. Arms were distributed among the trades and an effectual effort was made to erect batteries at Leith. Every preparation had been made for the descent, and articles of capitulation had been drawn up by Jones to be signed by the magistrates of Leith, when suddenly the adverse wind which had so often foiled his attacks upon his native land rose to such violence that he was obliged to bear away and run out of the Firth. One of his prizes foundered in the heavy sea which rose after the gale.

The country had now been thoroughly aroused, and knowing that Edinburgh, which was only a mile from

Leith, would surely send a body of troops for its protection, Jones realized that his last hope of surprising the town was gone. The plan was similar in intent to his attack upon Whitehaven, and had he been able to attempt it on the preceding evening while the wind was still favorable, he would have unquestionably succeeded; but the happy moment had passed, and he therefore with many regrets abandoned the cherished and long-contemplated project. He had still another project which he believed could be successfully accomplished, but as it offered no material reward and his associate captains had now become thoroughly alarmed at the idea of remaining long in sight of the enemy's territory, they absolutely refused to support him. “The enemy, Mr. Cottineau said, would send against us a superior force, and declared that if I obstinately continued two days longer we would surely be taken.” Owing to the indiscretion of M. de Chaumont, the duration and port of return for the cruise had been disclosed to Jones's associates, and they declared their intention of steering without delay for the Texel. The captain of the *Vengeance* announced that he and Cottineau would depart alone if Jones refused to join them. In this predicament he still considered the feasibility of carrying out his plan with his single ship. “Nothing prevented me,” he said, “from pursuing my design, but the reproach which would have been cast upon my character as a man of prudence had the enterprise miscarried.”

The conclusion which arises from the explanation of his conduct on this occasion is inevitable. The per-

sonal renown of any officer should unquestionably be subordinated to his desire to serve his country. In many instances Paul Jones had shown his willingness to sink his personal aims in the service of the common cause. But in the unprecedented situation in which he was now involved, shorn of every shadow of authority over his reluctant and insubordinate associates, he was betrayed into an exhibition of most unusual hesitation, between his devotion to the country of his adoption and his regard for his reputation which was then and always the leading motive of his life.

It was now late in September, and the time allotted for the cruise was fast drawing to a close. Deserted by most of his vessels and unsupported by his colleagues, Jones now steered for the last rendezvous of his squadron off Flamborough Head, hoping to find there the *Alliance* and the *Cerf*. The region around this triangular headland, which projects far out from the east coast of England, was chosen by Jones as an excellent cruising-ground, for the reason that the coastwise vessels, forced out of their direct course, tend to pass very close to the land in a favorable position for attack. To the north of the head is the port of Scarborough, directly southwest is Bridlington Bay, and thirty miles farther south another headland, the Spurn, juts out at the mouth of the river Humber. Off these several harbors Jones knew that he must meet with numerous colliers and merchantmen, and, in spite of the shortness of the time which still remained, hoped against hope that he might still fall in with the ex-

pected Baltic fleet, the favorite object of Franklin's plans, which he had been ordered to intercept at any and every favorable opportunity.

Sailing down along-shore, on the 19th and 20th, he took two sloops and a brigantine, sinking both sloops, and on the 21st, having arrived off Flamborough Head, the *Pallas* chased one sail toward the northeast, while the *Bon Homme Richard*, followed by the *Vengeance*, sailed around the point in pursuit of another which appeared toward the south. “The one I chased,” said Jones, “a brigantine collier, belonged to Scarborough and was soon taken and sunk immediately, as a fleet then appeared to the southward. It was so late in the day that I could not come up with the fleet before night. At length, however, I got so near one as to force her to run ashore between Flamborough Head and the Spurn. Soon after I took another brigantine from Holland, belonging to Sunderland, and at daylight the next morning, seeing another fleet steering towards me from the Spurn, I imagined them to be a convoy which had been for some time expected. One of them had a pendant hoisted and appeared to be a ship of force. They had not however courage to come on, but put back (into the Humber) all but the one which seemed to be armed, and that one also kept to windward very near the land, and on the edge of some dangerous shoals where I could not with safety approach.” Jones now signalled for a pilot, and two came off, one of whom, mistaking him for an Englishman, furnished him with the private British signal which the fleet had been ordered to obey. Immedi-



ately flying this signal, Jones now tried to decoy the merchantmen out of the harbor, whither they had retreated, but failed in his attempt. He then decided it to be imprudent to remain longer near this dangerous harbor, and steered north again toward Flamborough Head to rejoin the *Pallas*.

On the morning of the next day, the 23d, the weather being calm and clear, Jones continued the business of overhauling the merchant-ships which appeared from every direction in those teeming waters. The brig from Holland was not then in sight, so he turned southwest to chase a brigantine which appeared to windward. He had pursued her very near to the land, when about noon he perceived a much larger ship which appeared to the north off Flamborough Head. He now armed one of the pilot-boats under Henry Lunt, his second lieutenant, whom he sent off with a party of fifteen to take the brigantine, which had come to anchor in Bridlington Bay, and turning northeast himself, he went off in chase of the larger ship. Soon after, at about one o'clock, he saw a fleet of forty-one sail bearing N.N.E. around the projecting headland, and at once made out that it was the Baltic fleet which he had been so anxiously awaiting. He instantly called back the pilot-boat and made signal for a general chase. The fleet was preceded by two large ships of war, the *Serapis*, Captain Pearson, and the *Countess of Scarborough*. The captain of the *Serapis* had come at daybreak close in with Scarborough, where he was informed of the presence of a hostile squadron which had been seen standing southward on the previous day.

He therefore signalled the fleet to continue its course out to sea and to leeward while he made all sail to windward to get between it and the ships of the enemy. The convoy disregarded his signals and crowded all sail to round Flamborough Head and escape, but when, about noon, they caught sight of Jones's squadron, they suddenly tacked, let fly their topgallant sheets, firing guns in token of distress, and fled like a flock of frightened birds straight for the port of Scarborough. As soon as Jones caught sight of the fleet he signalled for his three ships to form in line of battle to engage. The *Pallas* and the *Vengeance* obeyed, the *Pallas* taking a position to leeward of the *Bon Homme Richard*, and the *Vengeance* bringing up the rear. But Landais, in the *Alliance*, sailed on disregardfully past the *Serapis*, near the shore and to windward, to await events in safety.

The *Serapis* and the *Bon Homme Richard* were now sailing in converging lines along the opposite shores of the triangular headland, the *Serapis* heading southeast, and the *Richard* northeast toward a point at sea about two leagues from the shore. At one o'clock, as Pearson related in his admiralty report, “we got sight of the enemy's ships from the masthead, and about Four we made them plain from the deck to be three large ships and a brig, upon which I made the *Countess of Scarborough* a signal to join me, she being in shore with the convoy. At Five the *Serapis* brought to, to await the *Countess of Scarborough* which joined a half an hour later. At Six the two ships went about, steering westward in order to keep their ground better

between the enemies' ships and the convoy." Perceiving their intention, Jones also tacked, turning sharply at six points of the compass, so that he gained in turn the weather-gauge, and the advantageous position between the English ships and the shore. Although sailing almost directly before the wind, which was S.S.W. from the land, the slow-sailing *Bon Homme Richard* did not come within hail until seven o'clock, when she came to by the side of the *Serapis*. The *Pallas* and the *Vengeance* were now lying some distance to leeward, near the *Countess of Scarborough*, the *Alliance*, out of gunshot to windward, and the *Bon Homme Richard* was left alone with the *Serapis*. She was an entirely new ship of war and on her first commission; she was of improved and modern construction, manned with a picked crew of three hundred and twenty Englishmen, and commanded by a captain of well-known courage and ability. The *Bon Homme Richard*, with her motley and ill-assorted crew and her makeshift armament, was a worn-out old Indiaman, built for the carrying trade, slow sailing and unwieldy. Although classed as a forty-four-gun ship the *Serapis* actually mounted fifty; she had two covered decks, twenty eighteen-pounders being placed on the lower deck, and twenty nine-pounders on the main deck, while above on the uncovered spar deck there were ten six-pounders, throwing in all three hundred pounds. The old-fashioned *Bon Homme Richard*, which had six eighteen-pounders on the lower gun-deck, fourteen twelve and fourteen nine-pounders on the main deck, with eight six-pounders above, was no match for this

formidable antagonist, and as events disclosed after the first broadside, had only the main-deck guns with three on the quarter-deck with which to engage the enemy. She had a high old-fashioned poop, on which Jones had stationed Colonel Chamillard and a body of French marines, and very broad tops, fortunately capable of carrying a large force of riflemen, which were under the command of Lieutenant Stack, of the Irish regiment. Her company, which originally amounted to three hundred and eighty men, was reduced to not more than three hundred by the absence of the various men who had been detached to man the several prizes, and by the loss of both the second and third lieutenants, Henry and Cutting Lunt, with their respective companies. The latter, with two detachments of men who had been captured off the coast of Ireland, represented a serious loss, which was further augmented by the absence of Henry Lunt with his fifteen good men, who failed to obey Jones's signal to return to the ship after the battle had begun. Thus Jones, at the moment of engagement, found himself most unfortunately deprived of two of his American officers, Richard Dale, his first lieutenant and very able assistant, only remaining, together with a few inexperienced subordinates and petty officers.

Slowly, on that calm and beautiful autumn evening, the sunlight faded over the green hills of England and the dim curtains of the lingering twilight hung across the sea. The transparent shadows of those northern latitudes enveloped the approaching vessels, and a silence fell upon the spectators who, at news of the imminent

engagement, had assembled in numbers under the walls of the Scarborough fort and upon the heights of Flam-borough Head. The two vessels were now pointing on the same tack in a northwesterly direction toward the head, the *Richard* slightly in advance of the *Serapis*, on the latter's port bow. (Position 1.) Both ships had been prepared for action, with decks cleared and courses hauled up, awaiting the signal to begin. At the last moment a deep and breathless silence settled down upon the *Richard*. The *Serapis* spoke first: "What ship is that?" Hoping to drop farther toward the stern of the enemy in a last moment of delay, Jones answered, "I can't hear what you say." Again the *Serapis* hailed: "Answer immediately or I shall be under the necessity of firing upon you." The next instant a blaze of fire burst simultaneously from both the ships, announcing to the listening thousands that the battle had begun; but when the fire from the *Serapis* sank into momentary darkness, another scar-let shaft lit up the sea. Disaster, great enough to decide the fate of the *Bon Homme Richard* and to cause any other commander at that moment to give up the battle, wrecked the lower gun-deck, where two of the old eighteen-pounders, exploding at the first fire, killed nearly every man at that station, blowing up a portion of the main deck above and rending a great hole in the hull. Instantly Jones recalled the few survivors and ordered the ports to be closed.

The two ships were now abreast and the *Serapis*, which had fired the first broadside with her quarter-and main-deck guns, now unmasked a lower battery,

disclosing to the *Richard* that she was a double-decker and more than her match.

"The battle now continued with unremitting fury, and every method was practised on both sides to gain an advantage and to rake each other, and I must confess that the enemy several times gained thereby an advantageous situation in spite of my best endeavor to prevent it, as I had to deal with an enemy of greatly superior force. I was under the necessity of closing with him to prevent the advantage he had over me in point of manœuvre." Thus wrote Paul Jones in regard to the first stages of the conflict, when he, as well as every man on board his ship, realized that they were dealing with an enemy which in men and metal was overwhelmingly superior. Again and again Jones tried by backing his topsails to get astern of the *Serapis*, but with some of her braces shot away the slow-sailing *Richard* responded feebly to her helm, and in spite of every effort failed to execute the manœuvre.

The first evolutions of the two combatants as they feinted like gladiators for the advantage are lacking in Jones's account, and are likewise omitted by Pearson in his report to the Admiralty, with the evident intention of minimizing the advantages of his greater strength and speed. But Nathaniel Fanning, one of Jones's midshipmen and his secretary, has supplied the missing details: "The wind was now very light, and our ship not under proper command, and the *Serapis* outsailing us two feet to one, which advantage the enemy discovered and improved, by keeping under our stern and raking us fore and aft."

The two vessels thus successively backing their top-sails to get astern of each other, the *Richard* failing and the *Serapis* succeeding, must have assumed at least twice Position 3, as indicated in the diagram.

The *Serapis* now tried to cross ahead of the *Richard* (Position 4), pouring a slanting fire into her lee quarter and attempting to lay her athwart hawse (an incident related by Dale and Fanning), but finding that he had miscalculated his distance, and that the *Richard* would be aboard of him, Pearson put his helm alee, which brought the two ships in a line ahead (Position 5). The *Richard's* bow now running into the stern of the *Serapis*, Jones seized the opportunity of closing with the enemy, and ordering grappling-irons to be thrown out, took command of a boarding-party to rush the English ship, but was repulsed, seeing with infinite chagrin his grappling-irons lose their hold and fall into the sea (Position 6). Pearson now again (according to his narrative, which is clear and detailed from this point), "backed his top sails to get even with him again" (Position 7).

At this stage of the battle, after nearly an hour of broadsiding, the helpless *Richard* was in reality a beaten ship. Colonel Chamillard, seeing nearly every one of his men killed, abandoned his station at the poop and retired to the quarter-deck.

The entire battery of twenty-eight twelve and nine-pounders on the main deck, manned by a picked company of Americans and marines under Dale and Weibert, on which Jones had placed his chief dependence, was silenced. The hole in the *Richard's* side, made by

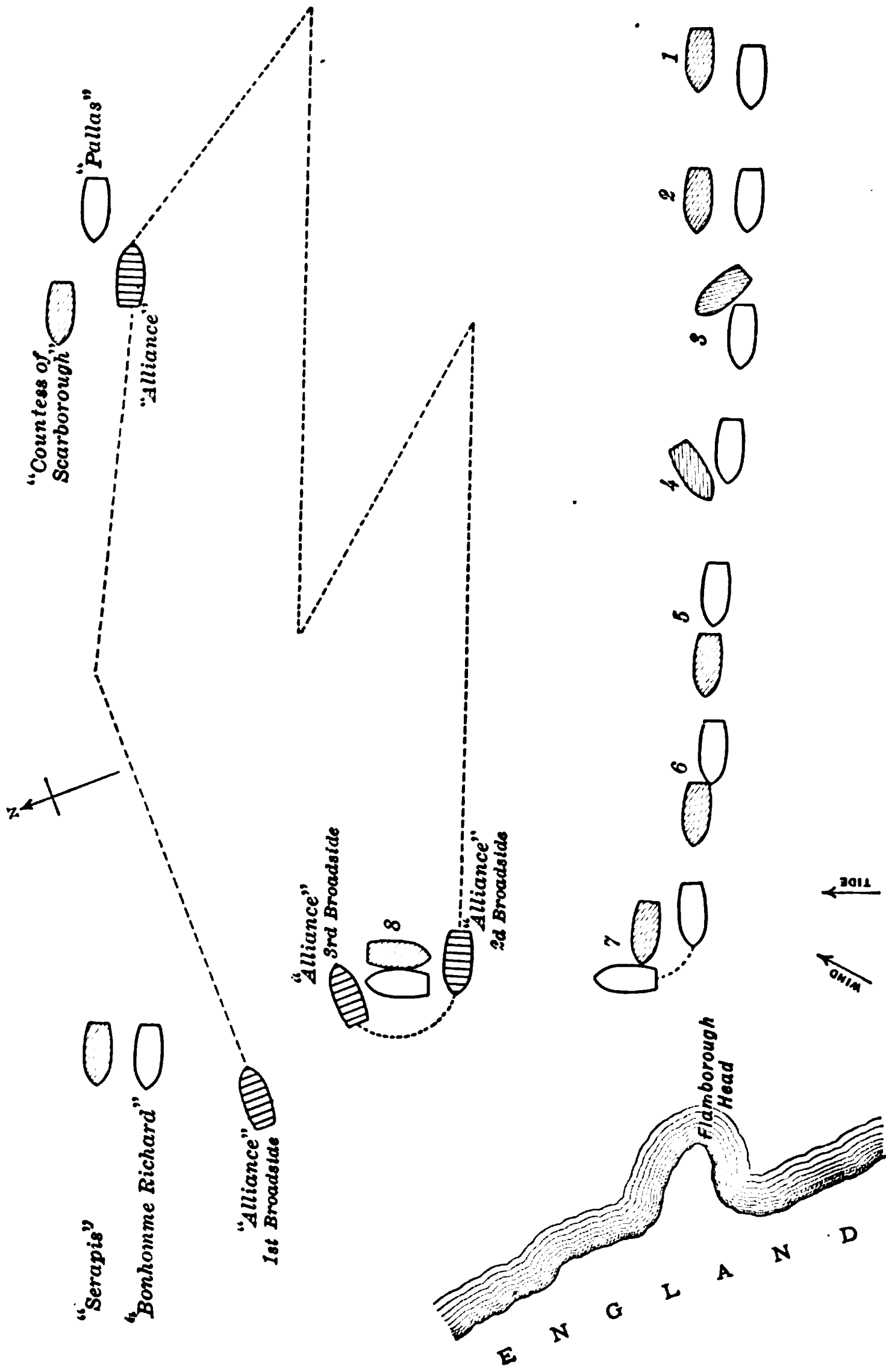


DIAGRAM OF THE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE "SERAPIS."





the explosion of the guns on the lower gun-deck, had now been so enlarged by the incessant fire of the enemy's terrible eighteen-pounders, which crashed almost without resistance through her ancient timbers, that an enormous chasm gaped wide between the main-mast and the stern, with only a few stanchions remaining to keep the upper decks from collapsing into the hull. The main deck thus lay open to the wind and waves so widely that a coach-and-six could have driven through from side to side. The shattered hulk of the *Bon Homme Richard*, with the slightest rise of wind or sea, would soon have plunged beneath the waves. At this appalling moment, while the hull of the helpless ship was being literally knocked to pieces by the great guns of the enemy's lower batteries, the men fell by scores under the hail of musketry and the sweeping fire of grape-shot from the guns of the enemy's poop and forecastle. Every gun on the *Bon Homme Richard* had been silenced except the three nine-pounders on the quarter-deck, where Paul Jones stood giving his orders for a last attempt to lay the enemy's ship on board. One single hope remained: the last desperate possibility that he could force the disabled and doomed vessel across the bows of the *Serapis*.

In that moment of agonized suspense, while Pearson was dropping back to get abreast of his enemy, the *Richard* fortunately blanketed the sails of the *Serapis* and slowly forged ahead. All now depended on the wind, that capricious wind which had so often thwarted Jones's well-laid plans. Would it fail him now?

The guns of the *Serapis* had made several holes in

the *Richard's* hull 'twixt wind and water, and the hold began to fill, but still the ship bore on, slowly but surely answering to the helm. And suddenly the wind whispered in her sails. "Our helm was put hard a weather then," says Fanning, "the main and top sails then braced back, a fresh flaw of wind swelling them at the same instant, which shot our ship quick ahead, and the *Serapis* ran her jibboom between our starboard mizzen shrouds."

Jones at the same time cried out: "Well done, my brave lads, we have got her now." "Instantly the *Serapis* let go an anchor, hoping that the *Richard's* headway would tear the ships apart, by means of which they would have escaped," as Jones relates, "had I not made them well fast to the *Bon Homme Richard*." At last, after long months of waiting, Jones had his chance, the one possible desperate chance which he had long counted on to win his victory in spite of every disadvantage. One was enough for him, and history tells how he improved it. From this point on began that unequalled exhibition of personal ascendancy which has made the fame of Paul Jones and given the renowned engagement its unique place in the annals of naval warfare. And this moment, when he at last grappled with his enemy, was at once the crisis and the climax of his career. Springing like a cat upon his prey, he ordered Stacy to bring him a hawser, and as the officer, fumbling at the knot, let fall a sailor's oath, Jones took it from his hand, making the enemy's jibstay fast to the mizzen-mast of the *Richard*, saying gravely: "Don't swear, Mr. Stacy; we may at the next

**THE FIGHT OF THE "SERAPIS" AND THE "BON HOMME RICHARD."**

From a print in the collection of Mr. Charles A. Munn.



moment be in eternity, but let us do our duty.” The two ships now swung to the wind and tide. The *Serapis*, under the action of the wind in her after-sails, was turned stern to the north, her bowsprit breaking off at the same time, so that the two ships swung head to stern and the fluke of the *Serapis*’s spare anchor hooking the *Richard*’s quarter, they lay close together with yards interlocked and the muzzles of their guns touching each other’s sides.

“A novelty in naval combats was now presented,” as Dale relates, “to many witnesses but few admirers, and the rammers were run into the respective ships to enable them to load, to make room for running out the guns.” The captain of the *Serapis* now gave orders to shift his gunners to the starboard batteries, which had not heretofore been brought into action; their port-sills, still lowered and pressed closely against the *Richard*’s side, were therefore blown out and crashed with the first discharge into the hull of the American ship. But now, although the incessant thunder of the enemy’s guns rolled in deafening explosions underneath the trembling boards on which he stood, although his ship was leaking like a sieve and instant destruction waited on each moment, Jones with perfect calmness prepared to make the most of his desperate opportunity, of beating his enemy at close quarters. The purser, Mr. Mease, who had commanded the guns on the quarter-deck, dangerously wounded, was removed to the cockpit, and Jones took his place, rallying with great difficulty a few frightened men, who with his aid finally succeeded in bringing over one of the lee guns across

the bloody deck, so that they had all three available for use against the enemy.

It was now eight o'clock, and a round harvest moon lit up the scene. By her bright light they could see the main-mast of the *Serapis* standing out blackly clear amid the interlocking yards of the two ships. Against this Jones himself directed the fire of one of the guns, loading it with double-headed shot, while the other two, as he relates, "were exceedingly well served with grape and cannister shot to silence the enemies' musketry and to clean her decks." And now, thronging up from the subterranean vaults of the *Richard*, Dale and his marines came to Jones's assistance and directed a skilful fire against the men upon the exposed decks of the *Serapis*.

The fire from the tops which had been bravely sustained throughout the whole action also seconded Jones's little battery, driving the gunners from the enemy's quarter-deck and forecastle, and by sheer force of superior marksmanship silenced the enemy's musketry and finally cleared her decks. At this point, as Jones was afterward informed, Pearson had decided to strike, when the carpenter of the *Richard*, who was at the pumps and had seen one of them disabled by a shot from the enemy, cried out that the ship might sink at any moment. The master-at-arms, hearing at the same instant that Jones and Dale had both been killed, and believing that he was now in command, rushed up from below with the carpenter and a gunner to haul down the flag. The flag, fortunately, was gone—shot away with the ensign staff, and the cowards bawled for quarter.

"What scoundrels are these?" cried Jones, throwing both his pistols at the head of the gunner and felling him as he fled in terror toward the gangway. Back also went the master-at-arms and the carpenter, skulking to their posts. But now, at the sound of the cry for quarter, Pearson himself called out to Jones asking if he had struck.

"I have not yet begun to fight," was the reply which flashed back, vivid and sharp as a lightning stroke from out the battle-clouds—a reply as characteristic of the man as of the moment, and justly renowned.

Any other commander of ordinary human mould would at such a moment, with silenced guns and riddled ship, have accepted defeat; but Jones knew that at last he had an advantage over his terrible antagonist, and while the *Richard* remained afloat he determined to use it to the last possible instant. For a new form of naval battle was about to be tried out to the astonishment of his enemy and the amazement of posterity—a battle not of cannon but of musketry, and in this, his own invention, Jones knew that he had his opportunity and a desperate chance of success. Driven from the exposed decks by the shrewd musket-fire of Dale and his marines, the whole force of the *Serapis*, which was now massed at the protected batteries below, still poured their fire against the hull of the *Richard*, but the great shot of the eighteen-pounders now passed without resistance through the abandoned main deck of the American ship, falling harmlessly into the sea beyond, while the crew of the *Richard*, driven up from



below and swarming on the quarter-deck and in the tops, poured a continuous musket-fire and an incessant rain of hand-grenades and combustibles of all sorts upon the exposed decks of the enemy.

The men in the *Richard's* tops, passing freely over the interlocking yards, invaded the tops of the enemy itself, and after a sharp battle in the air, dislodged the Englishmen and gained a position in the main-top of the *Serapis*, commanding the whole extent of the ship from quarter-deck to forecastle. At this desperate moment, standing almost alone upon the fire-swept deck, Pearson assembled a party from below and attempted to board the *Richard*, but was met by a determined and superior force of picket-men headed by Jones himself, who succeeded in beating them off.

At this point there came a lull in the continuous roar of the cannon and the deadly rain of combustibles, for both ships took fire from the explosion of the hand-grenades, and all hands ceased fighting and helped to extinguish the flames. The rotten timbers of the *Richard*, soaked with tar and oakum, blazed persistently in spite of all the water which was thrown upon them. The *Serapis* was on fire in no less than twelve places, with her whole starboard side ablaze, while above in both ships the light sails and rigging were also on fire, the flames spreading rapidly from one ship to the other, until at last, as Fanning relates, "Our mainmast also took fire, causing the greatest consternation, and the water which we had in a tub in the fore part of the top, was expended without extinguishing the flames. We then had recourse to our coats and jackets, which in a

**CAPTAIN PAUL JONES SUBDUING A SAILOR WHO ATTEMPTED  
TO STRIKE HIS COLORS IN THE ENGAGEMENT  
WITH THE "SERAPIS."**

**From a print in the collection of Mr. Charles A. Munn.**



short time smothered it." The action was now resumed with added fury, and again those flaming airy heights poured fiery death upon the enemy's decks. Again the thin scream of musket-balls sang its treble accompaniment to the rolling thunder of the guns.

Below, the riddled hulk of the *Richard* was a chaos of corpses and broken guns, a charnel-house of flame and death, belching from her blood-stained chasms suffocating smoke-clouds and blinding jets of fire; above, the mad carnage raged among the bodies of the slain; the swarming motley crew, transformed by the courage of their commander into fearless battle-fiends, grasped every possible weapon, firing out of the flame-stained smoke-clouds full in the faces of the enemy, and with pikes and lances striking at their antagonists across the nettings and through the open port-holes. Among them, hatless, powder-stained, Jones stood at his gun, cheering them on with his great voice, and again bending to send his deadly fire against the main-mast of the enemy.

The fire of the guns, the mounting flames from the two burning vessels, as they battled in a death embrace amid the rolling smoke-clouds, lit up the sea, and the silent shore gave back the reverberating echoes of the deadly orchestra of war.

This mad contest had raged for about an hour when a black shape appeared suddenly out of the darkness, and amid the smoke-clouds they perceived another ship, the *Alliance*, coming at last, as they supposed, to their assistance. "I thought now that the battle was at an end," said Jones, "but to my utter surprise he

discharged a broadside full into the *Bon Homme Richard*. We called to him for God's sake to stop firing into the *Bon Homme Richard*. There was no possibility of his mistaking the enemy's ship for the *Bon Homme Richard*, there being the most essential difference in their appearance and construction; besides it was full moonlight, and the sides of the *Bon Homme Richard* being all black, and the sides of the prize were yellow, yet for the greater security I showed the signal of our reconnaissance by putting out three lanthorns, one at the head, another at the stern, and the third in the middle, in a horizontal line. Every tongue cried out that he was firing into the wrong ship, but nothing availed." "My situation now," he continues, "was really deplorable. The leak gained on the pumps, and the fire increased on board both ships." A few moments after this treacherous attack the *Alliance*, passing to leeward across the bow of the *Richard*, sank like an evil apparition into the surrounding darkness; and again the contest intermitted while both crews essayed to extinguish the fire. Then another danger fiercer than fire itself sprang like fury at the throat of the American commander. Panic, inhuman, bestial, roared and surged about him, for the five hundred maddened English prisoners, released at this moment by the treacherous master-at-arms, now rushed up from below shrieking that the ship was sinking. Only the power of the beast-tamer—quick as light, magnetic, unwavering—could have saved Jones now. With sublime audacity and instant presence of mind, he ordered them to the pumps, telling them that it was

the *Serapis* which was sinking, and that their lives depended upon keeping the *Richard* afloat. They obeyed, this overwhelming force of Englishmen which at that moment could have captured the *Richard* and delivered her over to the enemy, and, commanded by Dale, who had courageously assisted Jones at this crisis, retired to the pumps and there remained. One man only, the captain of the *Union*, braver than the rest, escaped over the bulwarks, informing Pearson of the desperate plight of the *Richard*, and advising him to hold out a little longer, for she would surely be compelled to strike. But now the fortune of the battle which had been turning surely toward the English suddenly favored Jones. The captain of the *Serapis*, taking heart from the encouraging message he had received, still stood on the deck, momentarily expecting the surrender of the *Bon Homme Richard*. He was once more alone, having ordered all hands again to retire to the protected decks and to continue firing into the *Richard's* hull, believing that a few more broadsides would surely sink her. But even there, "under the protection of the decks," as Dale relates, "they were not more secure." An American sailor, creeping out to the extreme end of the main-yard of the *Serapis*, threw with shrewd aim a hand-grenade down upon the hatchway, where, glancing inward, it fell into the midst of a line of cartridges on the main deck, which had been carelessly laid there by the powder monkeys. Some of the cartridges were broken, and the scattered powder took fire, blazing from one cartridge to another all the way aft, producing a terrifying and fatal explosion. "The effect was tremen-

dous," said Dale, "more than twenty men were blown to pieces, and many stood with only the collars of their shirts upon their bodies."

This was the actual turning-point, for now panic seized upon the enemy, which was increased by the second appearance of the *Alliance*, which, sailing back again very close under the stern of the *Richard*, poured a deadly scattering fire of grape-shot into the two vessels as they lay closely bound together bow and stern. After firing this broadside at the two vessels, the *Alliance* now passed around the off side of the *Richard*, still firing, and finally across her bow, where she killed several men, including Mr. Caswell, whose station was in the forecastle.

The second appearance of the *Alliance*, which was now dealing death to friend and foe alike, hastened the issue of the conflict, and was perhaps the final reason of Pearson's surrender, for he knew that in her unharmed condition the *Alliance* could easily have destroyed him, bound helplessly as he was to his unyielding enemy. But the broadsides of the *Alliance*, firing into the unprotected sides of the *Richard* with fatal low-aimed shots, and killing the men upon her exposed decks, were dealing worse destruction to her consort. Most of the enemy's forces were below and in no danger from the shots of the *Alliance*, which never came under the guns on her disengaged side. But neither of the ships could bring a single gun to bear upon the *Alliance*, and Jones's officers also believed that it was time to give up the fight. "Some of the officers," he wrote, "in whose courage and common sense I entertained the highest

opinion, persuaded me to strike; I would not however give up the point."<sup>1</sup>

That deathless valor which could not break nor yield, which had withstood what again and again had seemed inevitable defeat, now had its deserved reward. Jones still stood motionless upon the quarter-deck, his eyes fixed narrowly upon the main-mast of the *Serapis*, against which he had poured his ceaseless fire, and at last he saw that it began to shake. His practised ear discerned that the fire of the enemy was decreasing, and in a last rally he cheered his men to redoubled efforts. "Our fire increased," he wrote, "and the British colors were struck at one half hour past ten o'clock."

So fell the flag of England, struck by Captain Pearson's own hand, as none of his people would venture aloft upon the duty; they were afraid of the American marksmanship.

"On finding that the flag of the *Serapis* had struck," Dale's narrative continues, "I went to Captain Jones and asked whether I might board the *Serapis*, to which he consented, and jumping upon the gunwale seized the main brace pennant and swung myself upon the quarterdeck. Midshipman Mayrant followed with a party of men and was immediately run through the thigh with a boarding pike by some of the enemy stationed in the waist, who had not been informed of the

<sup>1</sup> *Public Advertiser*, October 20, 1776: "One of the men escaped from Paul Jones says that in the engagement with the *Serapis*, Jones, almost exhausted with fatigue, sat down upon a hen coop. The Lieutenant of Marines went up to him and said, 'For God's sake, Captain, strike!' Jones looked at him, paused a moment, then leaped up from his seat and said, 'No, I will sink, I will never strike.'"



surrender of their ship. I found Captain Pearson standing on the leeward side of the quarterdeck, and addressing myself to him said, 'Sir, I have orders to send you on board the ship alongside.' The first lieutenant of the *Serapis* coming up at this moment, inquired of Captain Pearson whether the ship alongside had struck to him. To which I replied, 'No Sir, the contrary, she has struck to us.' The lieutenant, renewing the inquiry, 'Have you struck, sir?' was answered, 'Yes, I have.' The lieutenant replied, 'I have nothing more to say,' and was about to return below when I informed him he must accompany Captain Pearson on board the ship alongside. He said, 'If you will permit me to go below I will silence the firing of the lower deck guns.' This request was refused, and with Captain Pearson he was passed over to the deck of the *Bon Homme Richard*. Orders being sent below to cease firing, the engagement terminated after a most obstinate contest of three hours and a half."

After Captain Pearson had surrendered his ship, he made his way with the officer to the deck of the *Bon Homme Richard* and inquired for Captain Jones. "It is painful to me," he said, as he yielded up his sword to the American captain, "that I must resign this to a man who has fought with a halter around his neck." To this insolent speech Jones replied with a compliment, saying: "Sir, you have fought like a hero, and I make no doubt that your sovereign will reward you in a most ample manner." The remainder of this conversation, as reported by Fanning, disclosed that the Englishman was shamed into a more courteous atti-

tude by the gallantry of his victorious opponent. Captain Pearson then asked Jones what countrymen his crew principally consisted of. The latter said American. "Very well," said the former, "it has been diamond cut diamond."

The lashings were now cut which bound the two vessels together, when the mast of the *Serapis*, which had only been sustained by the interlocking yards of the *Richard*, went overboard, carrying the mizzen-mast with it. Jones now placed Dale in command of the *Serapis* with orders to follow the *Bon Homme Richard*. On going on board the prize and giving directions to back the ship to the rear of the *Richard*, Dale was astounded to find that the *Serapis* would not answer, although the head sails were aback and no after-sail set. In the greatest excitement Dale jumped off the binnacle, where he had been sitting, to investigate the reason of the extraordinary circumstance, and fell headlong to the deck. A splinter from one of the guns had badly wounded his leg, but he had been unconscious of it until that moment. The sailing-master of the *Serapis* now accosted Dale, informing him that he judged by his orders that he was ignorant that the ship was at anchor, another fact which had escaped his attention. Henry Lunt had by this time made his appearance and was on board the prize, and to him Dale gave orders to go below to cut the cable and take command of the *Serapis*, when he was carried on board the *Bon Homme Richard* to have his wound dressed.

The battle with the English was now over, and the beautiful *Serapis*, dismantled and beaten, lay at the heel

of her victor. "I had yet two enemies to encounter, far more formidable than the British, fire and water," wrote Jones. The smouldering timbers of the *Richard* again burst into flame, and the fire raged persistently, at one time approaching within a few inches of the powder-magazine, when, fearing that the ship would blow up, Jones ordered the powder to be thrown overboard, while all hands worked through the night to extinguish the flames, succeeding at last in subduing them.

"With respect to the situation of the *Bon Homme Richard*," Jones's narrative continues, "the rudder was entirely cut away from the stern frame, the timbers of the lower deck especially, from the main mast to the stern being greatly decayed with age, were mangled beyond my powers of description, and a person must have been an eye witness to form a just idea of the tremendous scene of the carnage, wreck and ruin which everywhere appeared. I was determined to keep the *Bon Homme Richard* afloat and if possible to bring her into port." The pumps were now manned with a double force of men from the *Pallas*, who worked with unremitting zeal, but in spite of their utmost efforts, the water gained in the hold, entering by the great holes which were in the bow, caused by the shots of the *Alliance* and by every gaping aperture of the riddled ship. At last, after a careful examination, the carpenters announced that it was impossible to stop the holes, and Jones was convinced that with the slightest rise of the wind it would be impossible to bring the ship into port, so he gave orders to immediately begin the business of removing the wounded. Until

this was accomplished, he commanded the English prisoners to remain on board, but, superior as they were in numbers to the guard which was left on the ship, they succeeded in getting her head to the land, toward which a fresh breeze was now blowing. Unarmed, they were subdued after a struggle, two of them being shot in the mêlée and a number eventually succeeding in getting hold of a boat and escaping to the shore.

The day of the 24th was passed in transferring the wounded to the *Serapis*, and the next day, the wind blowing fresh, Jones realized that it was impossible to keep the “good old ship from sinking.” All day the *Pallas* stood by her, while the water steadily rose and finally filled the hold. At nine it became necessary to abandon her, and at ten she rolled, settling forward, and went down bows first, her stern and mizzen-mast rising out of the waves, and the next instant, as Jones wrote, “I saw with inexpressible grief the last glimps of the *Bon Homme Richard*.” The instrument and sacrifice of her captain’s renown, her shattered hulk was a glorious receptacle for the bodies of the brave who had so desperately defended her.

In regard to the conduct of the captains of the three other ships, Cottineau, of the *Pallas*, alone behaved with proper professional skill or courage, and by his excellent handling of his slow-sailing merchant-ship, succeeded in taking the *Countess of Scarborough*. Although superior in guns to his smaller but infinitely better-built antagonist, he was met by a stubborn resistance, and only captured his prize after an hour’s hard fighting. This loyal and efficient assistance at

the hour of battle went far to atone for the cautious reserve which he had shown in his refusal to assist Jones in plans which appeared to his slow and less inspired judgment to be unwise. Captain Ricot, of the *Vengeance*, held off discreetly in the rear and took no part in the contest; no more did Mr. Henry Lunt with his fifteen men, who also held off, "thinking it was not prudent to approach the ship during the engagement," although after the ships had grappled it must always have been feasible to board the disengaged side of the *Richard*. Mr. Lunt lived probably to bitterly regret his decision, and to suffer with unavailing sorrow the ineffaceable stain upon his reputation.

The conduct of the captain of the *Alliance*, recalcitrant and insulting from the first, developed on this occasion into a unique exhibition of cowardice and treachery which afterward occasioned a serious investigation and brought about his ultimate ruin.

The track of the *Alliance*, from the first moment when the squadron perceived the Baltic fleet, gives a truthful representation of the mental processes of the man who directed it. Disregarding Jones's orders for forming in line to engage, Landais bore on with his superior speed past the commodore's ship directly toward the *Serapis*, giving the impression that at last he was about to exhibit a proper spirit and to engage the enemy with the vessel which was in every respect better fitted to meet her. The hopes of the officers who watched his course were soon disappointed, for he sailed by the *Serapis*, taking a position out of gunshot, where he could watch events in safety. From this

position he viewed the conflict until the moment when the two ships had been lashed together and were battling in their death embrace.

Perfectly conscious of the desperately wounded condition of his consort, and perceiving plainly the murderous broadsides of the enemy, which were belching destruction from her double decks against the silent and helpless sides of the *Richard*, he saw that the two combatants, secured as they were by the anchor of the *Serapis*, remained motionless in one place. He then sailed toward them out of pistol-shot, and poured a deliberate fire with grape-shot, which he knew would scatter, full into the stern of the *Richard* and the bow of the *Serapis*, although he was perfectly aware that by approaching nearer he could fire accurately into the enemy without danger to the *Richard*. After this he bore on to see what had happened to the *Pallas*; he found that she had captured the *Countess of Scarborough*, and hailing first one vessel and then the other, he sailed hesitatingly round and round them both, until Cottineau asked him whether it was his intention to take charge of the prize and permit him to go to the assistance of the disabled flag-ship, or whether he would go to Jones's aid himself.

Every moment in that desperate battle was fraught with fate to the *Richard*, but determined that Cottineau should be prevented from helping Jones, Landais finally stood off again toward his consort; sailing discreetly far out of the range of the enemy's guns on her disengaged side, he came around the stern and larboard side of the *Richard*, so closely at last that he was not more than

three points abaft her beam, when, in spite of the signals of reconnoissance which Jones had hung out after his first broadside, in spite of the chorus of voices which implored him not to sink them, he poured a second full broadside of deadly low-aimed shots under the water, full into her helpless hull, continuing his course until he was in front of the *Richard's* bow, when he poured his third broadside into the prow of his consort.

His reasons for these actions are only too clear. He intended to keep out of all danger to himself. He wished and intended to sink the *Bon Homme Richard* and to capture the *Serapis*, which was already beaten by Jones, and thus claim the credit for himself. Among the several points to which the officers of the *Bon Homme Richard* and the *Alliance* alike testified in the accusations which were formally drawn up against Pierre Landais are two statements, one made by Weibert and one by Stack and McCarthy, of the Irish regiment, testifying that Landais had acknowledged that in firing at both the vessels he had purposely used grape-shot, which he knew would scatter, and that he "thought it no harm if the *Bon Homme Richard* had struck, for it would have given him an opportunity to retake her and to take the *Serapis*."

The evident fact that his final appearance was a factor in Pearson's surrender was persistently claimed by Landais as the cause of the victory, and he maintained from the hour of the battle until the close of his dishonored life that it was he who had taken the *Serapis*. The cunning of the *demi fou*, to which dangerous class of afflicted humanity Pierre Landais un-

questionably belonged, is shown in all of his actions, together with the suspicion, cowardice, and treachery which represented the controlling elements in his hopelessly deranged and malignant character. His conduct in refusing to come to the assistance of his sinking consort after the battle was over was an action whose import, admitting of no discussion or defence whatever, adds the clearest sort of corroborative testimony in regard to the treacherous motives which directed his conduct during the engagement, and to the persistent hostility of his attitude toward Jones from the beginning of the cruise. The ultimate results of his conduct were far from carrying out his animosity toward Jones, for the credit of the capture of the *Serapis* remained wholly with the man whom he considered to be his rival, and his desertion and treacherous attitude served to enhance the glory of Jones's victory. When he received orders through Captain Ricot, of the *Vengeance*, to take a position astern of the *Bon Homme Richard* in the return voyage, he told Ricot insolently to “go tell the commodore that he may go where he pleases.”

The results of the renowned engagement, in the matter of killed and wounded, are impossible to calculate with accuracy, owing to the confessedly incomplete account which was sent in by the surgeon of the *Serapis* to the admiralty. This report admits to seventy-five wounded, of which eight died of their injuries, but Pearson states in his report that there were many more whom he had been unable to account for. Jones states that the number of wounded in the *Serapis* was more than a hundred, and that the killed were probably as



numerous. As the victor and guardian of the prisoners and wounded of the prize, he was in a better position to know their number than Pearson. Jones reported the loss on the *Richard* to have been forty-nine killed and sixty-seven wounded out of his crew, which by the loss of the barge and the two companies of men under Cutting and Henry Lunt, amounted to three hundred at the time of the engagement.

The records of the *Bon Homme Richard* were badly kept, due probably to the absence of Jones's two officers, and in the haste of removing the wounded were lost when the ship went down. The *Countess of Scarborough* lost four killed and twenty wounded. The loss on the *Pallas* was slight, and neither the *Alliance* nor the *Vengeance* had one man killed or one gun disabled.

The method which Paul Jones pursued in the engagement was up to that time entirely unprecedented in the history of naval warfare. Conscious of the hopeless inferiority of the old, worn-out, and unseaworthy ship under his command, he had filled her to overflowing with a far larger crew than was at that time the custom, relying on his chance of grappling with the fast-sailing war-ships of England, and the hope of winning victory by an overwhelming fire of musketry. To this end also he had well lined his tops, and supplied his ship with a large variety of combustibles. This method, invented by Paul Jones, was gloriously followed by Nelson in his immortal engagements; but the credit of the conception must always remain with its inventor.

The account of the battle as written by the two cap-

tains of the opposing vessels disagrees in no important particular, except in the amount of damage done to the *Serapis* by the *Alliance*, Pearson asserting that her broadsides caused him to surrender, while Jones explicitly states that the *Alliance* killed but one man on board the *Serapis*. Otherwise the two reports are almost identical as to the succeeding stages of the conflict. The account of Richard Dale, written at the request of Sherburne some forty years after the battle, although seamanlike and very interesting, differs somewhat from the reports of Pearson and Jones, for the evident reason that Dale's memory had not preserved all the details, and also from the fact that during the first stages of the battle he was at his station below on the main deck, and therefore not a witness of the first part of the engagement. His account of the first evolutions of the ships is therefore not to be implicitly relied on, and certainly not to be taken in preference to those of Jones and Pearson. He states that the *Bon Homme Richard* passed before the first broadside across the forefoot of the *Serapis*, and that the *Serapis*, after the first broadside, went in turn across the bows of the *Richard*. These statements are both incorrect. Sailing northeast along the lower side of the triangular promontory of Flamborough Head to meet the *Serapis*, which was sailing down southeast along the upper side of the triangle, the two ships both turned their heads sharply toward land, the *Richard* “bringing to,” as Pearson explicitly states, on the port side of the *Serapis*. At no time previous to the final execution of the manœuvre of laying the enemy athwart hawse, at

the moment when Jones succeeded in grappling the enemy, did the *Richard* pass across the forefoot of the *Serapis*. At no time did the *Serapis* pass entirely across the forefoot of the *Richard*, although once Pearson attempted the manœuvre, as shown in Position 4 of the diagram. The first manœuvres of the ships as mentioned above were unfortunately omitted in the reports of the respective commanders, but the *Serapis*, by her superior sailing and facility in handling, succeeded in getting behind the *Richard*'s stern and in raking her several times.

In the account of the conflict written by Admiral Mahan, the author takes note of the statement of Nathaniel Fanning, that the *Serapis* succeeded several times in raking the *Richard*, but remarks that if this occurred, it did not necessarily prove that the *Serapis* ever crossed over to the port side of the *Richard*. Other proofs that this manœuvre was never executed, and that the starboard range of guns was not brought into play until the *Richard* had grappled with the enemy and passed to her other side, are found in the statement that the port-sills of the starboard side of the *Serapis* had not been raised, and were blown out in the first fire, which took place when the two ships had been lashed together head and stern; as well as by the many-times attested and corroborated statement of the officers in regard to the manœuvres of the *Alliance*, which indicate with absolute certainty and great lucidity that the *Serapis* was never on the port side of the *Richard*.

In article 19<sup>1</sup> of the charges against Landais, it is

<sup>1</sup> Appendix G.

stated that “as the most dangerous shots which the *Richard* received under water were under the larboard (port) bow and quarter, they must have come from the *Alliance*, for the *Serapis* was on the other side.” “As Landais’s honor, if not his life,” Admiral Mahan continues, “was at stake in these charges, it is not to be supposed that his officers, besides two French marine officers, four of whom were especially well situated for seeing, would have made this statement if the *Serapis* had at any time been in a position to fire those shots.” The weight of this testimony is so conclusive that the present writer has seen no reason for discrediting the account of Nathaniel Fanning, who was in the tops from the beginning of the engagement, and who has alone furnished the details of the first manœuvres of the *Serapis* when she succeeded in keeping behind the *Richard* and raking her stern.

The fact that all of Colonel Chamillard’s men on the poop were immediately cut off is in itself strong evidence of a repeated fire against the rear of the vessel. Mr. Caswell, on the forecastle, was killed two hours later, when the *Alliance* passed across the bow of the *Richard*.

The opinions of Jones’s co-officers were warmly appreciative and lack nothing of the proper meed of honor which they immediately recognized as his due. Richard Dale, with whom Jones enjoyed the closest relations, and who referred to his glorious commander in intimate terms of affectionate admiration until the close of his life, gives him full measure of credit for the victory:

“From the commencement until the termination of the action, there was not a man on board of the *Bon Homme Richard* ignorant of the superiority of the *Serapis*, both in weight of metal and in the qualities of the crews. The crew of that ship were picked seamen, and the ship itself had been only a few months off the stocks; whereas, the crew of the *Bon Homme Richard* consisted of part American, English and French, and in part of Maltese, Portuguese and Malays; These latter contributing by their want of naval skill and knowledge of the English language, to depress rather than to elevate a just hope of success in a combat under such circumstances. Neither the consideration of the relative force of the ships, the act of the blowing up of the gun deck above them by the bursting of two of the eighteen pounders, nor the alarm that the ship was sinking, could depress the ardour or change the determination of the brave captain Jones, his officers and men. Neither the repeated broadsides of the *Alliance*, given with the view of sinking or disabling the *Bon Homme Richard*, the frequent necessity of suspending combat to extinguish the flames, which several times were within a few inches of the powder magazine, nor the liberation by the master-at-arms of nearly five hundred prisoners, could change or weaken the purpose of the American commander.”

Colonel Chamillard, another eye-witness and participant in the engagement, who had loyally assisted Jones from the outset of the cruise, has left a most generous testimony of his admiration for his famous associate, and seems to have realized from the hour of

the battle the height and quality of Jones's achievement. Intrusted with the official report of the cruise, which he carried post-haste to Paris, he received the first impression of the instant appreciation of Jones's victory, which spread rapidly throughout Europe, arousing the highest enthusiasm at the court of Versailles, and a panic of terror and rage at the court of Saint James.

PASSY, 9 October 1779.

At noon.

GENERAL, I delivered your despatches to M. de Sartine and to Franklin, who both appeared to me to be enchanted with your exploits, as well as every one who has any knowledge of the battle.

Your combat of the 23rd. places you in the rank of the greatest men, and immortalizes you. You see by the hour of my arrival at Paris, and that of my departure from the Texel, that I have lost no time. I expect that these gentlemen will direct me to rejoin you, which I greatly desire. I find the best possible disposition in this country towards you, and a desire to give you ample satisfaction in everything which you may ask.

Adieu General, good health and a little patience, and all will go well.

I am, with the truest attachment,

Your very humble servant,

CHAMILLARD.

To Captain John Paul Jones.

A description of the engagement from the pen of a high English authority,<sup>1</sup> while dealing, with the extreme

<sup>1</sup> Professor Laughton.

of insular prejudice and injustice, with Jones's personal character, gives unstinted praise to his conduct of the battle:

Throughout the action Jones' conduct as the captain of a ship of war is beyond all praise. His ship was in every way inferior to the *Serapis*, and Pearson was a man of known courage and good repute. I do not think, though every American writer thinks, that Jones took the *Serapis* not only single handed, but against the treasonable assistance of Landais on the *Alliance*. I think, though contrary to the opinion of every American writer, that it was the mere presence of the *Alliance* that determined the result. But on the other hand, I think it is impossible to overrate the ability, the pluck, the determination, and the presence of mind with which Jones fought and won the battle. The *Alliance* gave Pearson an excuse for striking his flag. It was Jones, and Jones alone, rather than the *Bon Homme Richard* who first beat him to a standstill.

The opinion of his only professional biographer, Captain McKenzie of the United States navy, concise and free from any partisan exaggeration, may also be quoted as the deliberate and unanimous judgment of the country whose cause he had so ardently adopted, whose independence he had so nobly helped to achieve:

The conduct of Jones throughout this battle displayed the greatest skill and the noblest heroism. He carried his ship into action in the most gallant style, and while he commanded with ability, excited his followers by his personal example. We find him in the course of action, himself assisting to lash the ships together, aiding in the service of the only battery from

which a fire was still kept up, and when the *Serapis* attempted to board, rushing pike in hand to meet and repel the assailants. No difficulties or perplexities seemed to appall him or disturb his judgment, and his courage and skill were equalled by his immoveable self composure. The achievement of this victory was solely due to his brilliant display of all the qualities essential to the formation of a great naval commander.

In the decayed and ill-contrived old ship in which he found himself cast out upon the ocean, in a scarcely seaworthy condition from the first, and having under his orders a motley collection of officers and seamen from almost every country, he fought a battle which for stubborn and resolute courage and triumphant success, is unsurpassed by any sea fight of ancient or modern times. This is a service the value of which will be felt in its animating and encouraging example, as long as we continue to have a name among the nations of the earth.

The immediate personal results of the engagement were commensurate with Jones's infinite desire for renown. At last the glory-haunted brain saw its fond visions realized, and from his baptism of fire the potential hero leaped full-fledged into immortality. His noble conceptions, by the aid of his unequalled determination and his great professional capacity, forced themselves at last, even with the poorest of means, into the reality of visible achievement. Unconquered and unconquerable, in spite of his unparalleled hindrances, he stood revealed at last for what he was.

No further triumphs awaited him in the ensuing years; no great fleets were ever placed under his capable command; this was his unique and crowning achieve-



ment. In spite of his difficulties and because of them, this unforgettable exhibition of his personal quality and potentiality raised him at once to equal rank with the greatest naval commanders of history.

His astonishing reply to Pearson, when asked if he had surrendered his doomed and sinking ship, expressed in his characteristic simple phrase, "I have not yet begun to fight," has become a national battle-cry, and is his password to the company of heroes.









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